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Spiritual Health in the Bhakti Tradition of Śrī Harirāyajī's *Śikṣāpatra*

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Abstract

The concept and treatment of anxiety in Śrī Harirāyajī's *Śikṣāpatra* (*Teaching Letters*), an epistolary bhakti text from 17th century India, is examined here with translation of the original Sanskrit verses, their vernacular Brajbhāṣā commentary by Gopeśvarjī and a 20th century spoken commentary in Hindi by Prathameśjī. A review of secondary literature on the Vallabha Sampradāya situates the present study in the field of bhakti studies. Analysis of these primary and secondary sources encourages scholars to pay further attention to the practical applications of bhakti texts, in addition to the more commonly treated transcendental elements of spiritual literature. Finally, with reference to clinical health research, a case is made for the potential contributions of bhakti literature to research on the mental and physical health impacts of spirituality and religion.

Abbreviations

84V = Gokulnāthjī and Harirāyajī. *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*.

252V = Gokulnāthjī and Harirāyajī. *Do Sau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*.

Bh.P. = *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

VMM = Harirāya and Gopeśvara. *Iktālīs Baḍe Śikṣāpatra*. Indore: Vaiṣṇava Mitra Maṇḍal 2007 [1972].

JMS = Jatipura manuscript of *Śikṣāpatra*, dated Samvat 1866 [1886?] (MS #13 in Appendix B).

SS 1915 = Harirāya and Gopeśvara. *Śrī Harirāyajī kṛt Baḍe Śikṣāpatra, Śrī Gopeśvarjī kṛt Vrajbhāṣā ṭīkā sahit*. Ahmedabad: Subodhinī Sabhā, Samvat 1972 [1915 CE].

SS 1936 = Harirāya and Gopeśvara. *Śrī Harirāya kṛt Baḍe Śikṣāpatra, Śrī Gopeśvarjī kṛt Vrajbhāṣā ṭīkā sahit*. Subodhinī Sabhā. 4th vṛtti, [Hindi], 1936.

RHS = Bahri, Hardev. *Rajpal Hindi Shabdakosh*.

SBK 1-3 = Śarmā, Caturvedī Dvārakā Prasāda. *Sāhityika Brajabhāṣa Kośa*, 3 vols.

MW = Monier-Williams, Monier. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

OHED = McGregor, R.S., ed. *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*.

DOB = Callewaert, Winand M., and Swapna Sharma. *Dictionary of Bhakti*.

RS = Religious and spiritual (literature, etc.)

Glossary¹

alaukika = non-worldly, divine

bhagavadiya = one who belongs to God, a devotee

bhāva = devotional mood, feeling, essence, or meaning

bhāvanā = contemplation, feeling, reflection on bhāva

bhakta = a devotee

bhakti = devotion

Bhagavān = God, Kṛṣṇa (Krishna)

Brajbhakta = Braj devotees, often particularly referring to gopīs

cintā = anxiety

cintana = contemplation

citta = mind

dharma = religious/spiritual life; duty

gopīs = dairymaids of Braj, the ideal devotees of Kṛṣṇa

grantha = text, treatise

hṛdaya = heart

jīva = individual soul

laukik = worldly, mundane

līlā = divine plays of Kṛṣṇa

mana = mind

māyā = the power of illusion

prapañca = the relative world, worldly affairs

Prabhu = Lord, master, Kṛṣṇa

Puṣṭi Mārga = the path of grace, Vallabhācārya's bhakti path, the Vallabha Sampradāya

rasa = aesthetic and divine elixir, nectar

Sampradāya = lineage, tradition, sect

satsanga = true or good association, the company of other devotees

¹ In this paper I follow the ISO 15919 transliteration standard, with nasalization distinguished (ṁ, ñ, ṅ, etc.), with the exception that for Brajbhāṣā vowel nasalization I have preferred a simple *n* (*milen*, *tāson*, etc.), which I find more readable for a general audience than the ISO recommended tilde. In Hindi and Brajbhāṣā passages, inherent shwa is mostly elided except where pronunciation or conventional spelling dictates (*Kṛṣṇa*, *dharma*, etc.).

sevā = service, worship

Ṭhākurjī = God, Kṛṣṇa

vacanāmṛt = teaching, lecture; lit., “nectar speech”

Vaiṣṇava = a follower of Viṣṇu; a follower of Kṛṣṇa

vārtā/vārttā = story, hagiography

vyavahāra = practical behavior

Acknowledgments

My first exposure to the *Śikṣāpatra* text featured in this thesis was through having it read aloud and translated for me by Shyamdas. I consider him a true paṇḍit of bhakti, not just because of the range of materials he has read and translated, but due to his ability to apply what he learned to his own life, and to impart sacred teachings to others in practical form. When I chose this text as the focus of my thesis, I did not fully realize that the topics of anxiety and grief so central to the *Śikṣāpatra* text would have such deep personal relevance in my life. While dealing with the usual anxieties of meeting thesis deadlines, I became devastated with grief after losing my best friend. Shyamdasji left this world suddenly last January. I owe and dedicate all of my experiences with *Śikṣāpatra*, including this thesis, to him.

The dedication and support of all of my professors and friends at UW enabled me to continually improve upon and eventually complete this thesis. I am amazed by the efforts and encouragement of Profs. Pauwels and Shapiro in particular for guiding me through the final stages of this thesis during their vacations. I am thankful to Profs. David Haberman, Frederick Smith and Jack Hawley for their ongoing personal and valuable guidance in my academic life. I was greatly aided by the comments of my friend Schuyler Sturm, a brilliant scholar of South Asia who seems to know everything about everything except, thankfully and admittedly, bhakti. He was the perfect reader to insightfully thrash what I thought was a near final draft and force me to reconsider my assumptions and approach to the material.

I acknowledge the above individuals and so many others as honorable teachers, while I rely on one to guide me in the synthesis of all aspects of my life, whether spiritual, academic, personal or otherwise. I honor Śrī Milan Goswami, a descendant of Vallabhācārya and outstanding representative of the bhakti teachings I have attempted to translate and analyze here.

Introduction

There can be little doubt as to the primacy of “text” in Indian *bhakti* (devotional) traditions, which draw deeply from the wells of Vedic, Upaniṣādic, and Purāṇic Sanskrit literature and have created expansive canons of vernacular poetry and prose. Bhakti literature continues to attract scholarly attention from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. While bhakti is often conceived popularly as personal devotion to the divine, the participatory, public and performative aspects of bhakti have also been recently highlighted by scholars.¹ While bhakti traditions appeal on many levels to the unity of all embodied beings, in some cases blurring lines of caste and gender, they simultaneously emphasize particular qualities of saints, songs, languages, and locations. It is this “tension between the difference and sameness of embodiment in bhakti” which makes it, in the view of Karen Pechilis, “one of the most influential perspectives on Hinduism.”² Scholars of history and South Asian languages have taken particular interest in the authorial intent, audience and interpretation of bhakti texts.³

This thesis contributes to the field of bhakti studies by demonstrating that the authors and commentators of the bhakti text *Śikṣāpatra* (*Teaching Letters*) stress practical aspects of spiritual life in this world. Such emphasis on practicality in bhakti challenges the tendency to interpret the spiritual content of bhakti texts merely in terms of otherworldly, transcendent states. My perspective is developed through an examination of mental health components of spirituality expressed in the *Śikṣāpatra*—an epistolary bhakti text unique in its combination of autobiographical, didactic and philosophical content. I also explore correspondences between

¹ Cf. Novetzke 2007 and Pechilis 1999.

² Pechilis, *Embodiment of Bhakti*, 41.

³ Cf. Hawley 1988, Lutgendorf 1991, Novetzke 2007 and Pauwels 2010, who notes regarding hagiographic bhakti literature that, “to fully understand these sources, one needs to situate them in their sectarian context, addressing issues of patronage, audience, and preservation,” 59.

spiritual and clinical descriptions and prescriptions for anxiety—and the related condition of emotional stress—in order to suggest potential contributions of bhakti literature to the field of spirituality and medicine.

The *Śikṣāpatra* was most likely composed in the late 17th century. It consists of 41 letters in Sanskrit verse by Śrī Harirāyajī (1590~1715? CE) and a Brajbhāṣā vernacular commentary on them by his younger brother Gopeśvarjī (1593 CE - ?). Both men were religious leaders of the Puṣṭi Mārga, or Vallabha Sampradāya—a Hindu Vaiṣṇava lineage founded by Vallabhācārya (1479-1531 CE).⁴ The lineage and teachings of Vallabhācārya spread primarily throughout the northern and western regions of India beginning in the early 16th century.

In this thesis I analyze the prominent concept of anxiety in two of the *Śikṣāpatra*'s 41 letters, with the help of relevant audio lectures by Prathameśjī, a 20th century descendent of the text's authors. I will suggest that a hidden contribution of bhakti texts can be found by shifting our focus away from their otherworldly speculations and instead to their practical suggestions for spiritual life in this world. In the *Śikṣāpatra* one finds veritable prescriptions—positive association, study of spiritual texts, mantra recitation, contemplation, selfless service, and faith—with which to treat the devotionally obstructive conditions of both worldly and existential anxiety.

Bhakti texts arise out of Indian religious traditions long concerned with the sounds and rhythms of language, and with sensory phenomenon as a mediator of inner experience. *Śikṣāpatra* touches upon both of these components, for it is both a metered, sacred recitation as well as an exegesis on mental states and their relevance to the personal, embodied experience of devotion. Paul Arney, author of the only English-language study dedicated to the *Śikṣāpatra*,

⁴ In cases where only Vikram Samvat dates were available, I have converted them to the Gregorian calendar using the simplified method of subtracting 57, with the result that the CE dates must be considered +/- 1.

came to the conclusion that, although it is a “sectarian manual intended primarily for a limited coterie of initiates,” the *Śikṣāpatra* has “an enduring and more general relevance,” namely, “its insistence that selfless love is the characteristic emotion and most efficacious form of religion.”⁵ However, I will argue that selfless love is but one of many foundational concepts discussed by the authors and commentators on the *Śikṣāpatra*; another is the treatment of anxiety (*cintā*), which may have more general relevance. My analysis of anxiety in *Śikṣāpatra* also exposes the vital link between religious/spiritual life (*dharma*) and practical behavior (*vyavahāra*) in the world. This connection between dhārmik and daily life emerges as a central focus to the authors and commentators of *Śikṣāpatra*.

Due to the Puṣṭi Mārga’s historical and continued popularity within India and especially among Gujaratis, an affluent emigrant group, the tradition now claims hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide. *Śikṣāpatra* is currently one of the tradition’s most accessible and widely read texts. The prevalence of extant manuscripts and more than twenty modern editions and translations of *Śikṣāpatra* attest to its popularity.⁶ Widespread current reading practices, including group discussions in Vaiṣṇava homes and temples around the world, suggest its status as a living text. This is similar in principle (though certainly not in scale) to Tulsīdās’s *Rāmcaritmānas*, which Growse once called India’s “guide to the popular living faith of its people.”⁷ Philip Lutgendorf has drawn scholarly attention to the importance of studying audience reception of *Rāmcaritmānas* and its nature as a “living” text: “Despite their undoubted contributions to an understanding of the origin, structure, and meaning of the epic, [textual studies] shed little light on its interaction with its audience—an interaction that has never been

⁵ Arney, “The Baḍe Śikṣāpatra,” 512.

⁶ Cf. Appendices A and B.

⁷ Lutgendorf, *The Life of a Text*, 1, quoting Growse, *The Ramāyaṇa of Tulasīdāsa*, 38.

primarily through the medium of the written word. Indeed, it seems ironic that a text so often cited as a popular and living tradition has received so little study as such.”⁸

In order to explore the living nature of the *Śikṣāpatra*, I combine my translation with reference to Prathameśjī’s 20th century exposition on the text. Perspectives internal to the *Śikṣāpatra* tradition reveal a style of bhakti that promotes living faith—the integration of spiritual outlook and principles into daily, practical life. From the devotional perspective, “practical life” can be more than simply increasing one’s political or economic power. Rather, these bhakti authors promote a spiritual way of life characterized by viewing worldly relationships and circumstances from a spiritual perspective and dedicating one’s mental and physical resources to the benefit of others. In this context, overcoming anxiety in all situations, as repeatedly stressed in the *Śikṣāpatra*, emerges as a precondition for a successful spiritual life in the world.

Researchers have recently turned to religious and spiritual (RS) literature to study the physiological and mental health impacts of RS beliefs and practices.⁹ Stress and anxiety are at the heart of an increasing volume of medical and mental health literature exploring the potential impacts of religion and spirituality (RS) on physical and psychological well-being. The *Śikṣāpatra* contains explicit teachings on the causes and treatment of anxiety in a devotional context. The authors suggest reasons why it is essential for the spiritually inclined to overcome worldly and existential anxiety. The anxieties and their largely faith-centered remedies described in the *Śikṣāpatra* may not precisely equate with modern medical conditions and treatments, but I will argue for their similarity and relevance.

⁸ Lutgendorf, 2.

⁹ Cf. Hill, Kopp and Bollinger 2007; Hill and Pargament 2003; Koenig 2009; Li and Goldsmith 2012; Oman and Thorensen 2007; Tartaro, Luecken and Gunn 2005.

The sensitive, pragmatic scientific approach of certain medical researchers may also shed light on the practical elements of devotion. In a paper on conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality, Hill and Pargament highlight the importance of consistent, daily life application of devotion, a point overlooked in many studies of bhakti literature:

To the devout, religion and spirituality are not a set of beliefs and practices divorced from everyday life, to be applied only at special times and on special occasions. Instead, religion and spirituality are ways of life to be sought, experienced, fostered, and sustained consistently.¹⁰

Despite the fact that its emphasis on faith can seem contrived or otherworldly to the non-believer, the *Śikṣāpatra* abounds with advice by which to cultivate a thoroughly experiential, spiritual way of life. The faith and religious beliefs taught in the *Śikṣāpatra* are strongly tied to everyday life and behavior, rather than to distant spiritual realms. Unseen worlds have definitely been conceived of and described in the theology of the Puṣṭi Mārga, but my analysis indicates that the authors and interpreters of the *Śikṣāpatra* are committed to exploring the practical elements of bhakti, which are largely absent from other scholarly studies on this particular text and tradition.

Existing Scholarship on the Vallabha Sampradāya

Scholarship on the Vallabha Sampradāya is less extensive than for many other Hindu traditions and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in particular. Still, a handful of scholars from various disciplines have researched the Vallabha Sampradāya directly. Subject areas taken up by scholars of religion and literature include authority and authorship (Hawley 1988), faith and sectarian ‘othering’ (Dalmia 2006), hagiography (Barz 2007, 1976), religious practice (Arney 2007), the role of emotion in Vallabhācārya’s theology (Timm 1991) and analysis of a select few

¹⁰ Hill and Pargament, “Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality,” 68.

of the Sampradāya's Sanskrit philosophical works (Smith 2011, 1998, etc.; Redington 2000, 1983). Social-historical approaches have focused on patronage and community formation (Saha 2007, 2006; Peabody 2003; Vaudeville 1996, 1980; Richardson 1979). Anthropological studies have examined Puṣṭi Mārga temple life (Bennett 1990) and festive and culinary arts (Toomey 1994), while ethnomusicologist have examined the temple music, musicians, and the sensory aesthetic experience mediated through poetry (Ho 2006, Gaston 1997 and Sanford 2008, respectively). The following summary review of these secondary works indicates the depth of sampradāyik literary material available and their wide applications to scholarly research.

Correlations between practical spiritual teachings and medical research have yet to be noted in academic literature on the Sampradāya. Only one book chapter, by Arney, has addressed the *Śikṣāpatra* in any detail, although R.G. Shah's *Vallabha Cult and Śrī Harirāyaji*, the result of his 1971 doctoral thesis, provides a comprehensive English study of the *Śikṣāpatra*'s primary author.¹ A summary of philosophical tenets of the Vallabha Sampradāya and their treatment in secondary sources, given below, suggests room for additional perspectives on bhakti literature not present in existing scholarship on the Sampradāya's texts.

Among historical scholarship, Richardson's 1979 dissertation on patronage and land grants in imperial records indicated the early popularity and political power of the Vallabha Sampradāya. His work laid the foundation for Shandip Saha, whose analysis of the historical context of the Vallabha Sampradāya prose hagiographies (the *vārtā* literature) attempts to determine social and political factors that could have led to the Sampradāya's consolidation and popularity. Saha contributes a penetrating social historiography perspective to literary analysis of

¹ Though Shah's English usage is often unclear and seems Christian influenced (e.g., "sermons," "preaching," etc.), he does include citations of his Sanskrit, Hindi and Gujarati textual sources; unfortunately he omits publication dates.

the main vārtā texts, the *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (84V) and *Do Sau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (252V). These devotional biographies of early followers of Vallabhācārya (84V) and his son Viṭṭhalnāthjī (252V) were likely compiled, edited and commented upon by the *Śikṣāpatra*'s primary author, Harirāyajī.² Both are foundational vernacular texts of the Sampradāya, and the 84V in particular is considered by some to be the first devotional prose literature in Brajbhāṣā.³

Saha postulates a long period of redaction of the vārtā literature, which he describes as “a number of texts that were written and revised between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the *Puṣṭi Mārga* was slowly extending its sphere of religious influence in western and central India.”⁴ Though Saha does not mention *Śikṣāpatra*, it would seem to fit into what he considers the third phase of the Puṣṭi community's growth (after its initial doctrinal core establishment by Vallabhācārya and the second phase of expansion and institutionalization under Śrī Gusāinījī):

The third and fourth generations of the *Puṣṭi Mārga*, who lived in Braj and western India, would initiate the third phase of the community's growth by focusing their efforts on the task of community building not only by honouring the *Puṣṭi Mārga*'s longstanding practice of seeking religious patronage from wealthy elites, but also by substituting Sanskrit with the more accessible *Braj Bhāṣā* as their principle mode of religious instruction.⁵

Saha further explains this perspective on vernacular literature as a community building exercise: “The production of the vārtā literature represented a most important phase in the

² Vaudeville, drawing on Taṇḍan's *Vārtā Sāhitya*, similarly notes that “From a philological point of view, the vārtās in archaic Braj, after the *khyāt* or *bāt* in old Rājasthānī, constitute important monuments of early prose in the Indo-Aryan vernaculars. The close relationship of Braj Bhāṣā with the other major western Hindi dialect, *Khaṛī Bholī*, on which standard modern Hindi is based, made these works easily accessible to Hindi readers, so that the Vallabhite Vārtās provided ready models for Khaṛī Bholī prose writers of the nineteenth century, such as the author of the *Prem Sāgar*, Lallu Lālī, whose language appears still coloured by his Braj Bhāṣā models” (Vaudeville, “The Govardhan Myth,” 15). Further investigation might indicate whether the Brajbhāṣā commentary on *Śikṣāpatra*, if available to the early writers of Khaṛī Bholī, was likewise utilized as a literary model.

³ Barz, *The Bhakti Sect*, 101.

⁴ Saha, “A Community of Grace: The Social and Theological World of the *Puṣṭi Mārga Vārtā* Literature,” 225.

⁵ Saha, “Community,” 229.

institutional growth of the community, for it built upon the philosophical and structural frameworks created by Vallabha and Viṭṭhalanāth in order to foster a sense of unity among devotees through the use of vernacular hagiography.”⁶ Saha’s analysis would only partially account for the creation of the *Śikṣāpatra*, because the letters themselves are among Harirāyājī’s many Sanskrit rather than vernacular writings. Saha’s theory would apply though to the vernacular Brajbhāṣā *Śikṣāpatra* commentaries of Gopeśvarjī, which were designed for a wider audience of devotees. In addition to his focus on community building, Saha also ties the historical context and literary developments of the vārtā literature into the construction of religious identity:

When the *Puṣṭi Mārga* had settled in Braj and eventually Rājasthān, it enjoyed the generous political and economic protection of their royal patrons and from their rapidly growing membership of wealthy Gujarātī merchants. Hence the *vārtā* literature, against this larger historical context, should be viewed as the product of a period of economic and political stability for the *Puṣṭi Mārga* which gave members of the community the time to turn their attention to developing a unique and distinct religious identity.⁷

Gopeśvarjī’s exhortations to his *Śikṣāpatra* readers to exclusively follow the teachings, teachers, divine personalities and other practitioners of his tradition could also be conceived as contributing to the construction of a distinct religious identity.⁸ Harirāyājī’s commentaries in the vārtā literature, according to Saha, were to “define exactly how individuals should live as the recipients of Kṛṣṇa’s grace and are equally concerned with legitimizing the claims of the *Puṣṭi Mārga mahārājas* to be Kṛṣṇa’s earthly intermediaries.”⁹ It is difficult to accurately judge the

⁶ Ibid., 242.

⁷ Ibid., 231-2.

⁸ Heidi Pauwels has similarly noted the role of narrative bhakti literature in consolidating community identity. She elucidates in her study of Harirām Vyās, “Hagiographies show not only how the author and his community imagined the saint but also how they imagined themselves. In the process of narration, identities are forged, or reforged, communities are created, or consolidated,” 55.

⁹ Saha, “Community,” 231.

exact levels of “concern” expressed for all elements of the *Śikṣāpatra* text. Yet I would concur that “how individuals should live” is a primary preoccupation for Harirāyajī and Gopeśvarjī in the *Śikṣāpatra* and a reflection of the authors’ focus on practical life advice. In this sense Saha’s analysis of Harirāyajī’s contributions to the vārtā literature could be applied to the *Śikṣāpatra* as well.

Other elements Saha identifies as hallmarks of the Vaiṣṇava dharma expressed in the vārtā literature also hold true in the *Śikṣāpatra*: “Performing true service to Kṛṣṇa not only requires a certain single-mindedness and commitment, but also humility which, the vārtā literature stresses in numerous stories, is the cardinal virtue of a true devotee of the *Puṣṭi Mārga*. A good community member never looks at the faults of other Vaiṣṇavas, is pure in mind, humble, patient in times of suffering, and never seeks to advertise his sectarian affiliations.”¹⁰ However, Saha’s conclusion that the vārtā literature presents an “ideal vision of a united *Puṣṭi Mārga* community” which is “close-knit, self-sufficient”¹¹ may be exaggerated when one considers the extensive focus on *individual* bhaktas and their devotional lives. For example, Saha reads in the context of feeding other Vaiṣṇavas that, “It is through feeding that one’s faith in both Kṛṣṇa and the teachings of the community are solidified. . . . The feeding stories in the vārtā literature, therefore, should be interpreted as a means of creating harmony and solidarity within the *Puṣṭi Mārga* community.”¹² Yet it is not conclusive that the vārtās’ emphasis on feeding others contributes to consolidation of a community ideal rather than simply being a dhārmik activity or a means of individual spiritual growth. Similarly, Saha considers the practice of gathering with other devotees for devotional discussions (*satsanga*) to also have a primarily

¹⁰ Ibid., 235.

¹¹ Ibid., 232.

¹² Ibid., 236.

communal purpose,¹³ whereas the individual benefits of *satsanga* are arguably the more primary focus in the *vārtā* and *Śikṣāpatra* literature.

Meilu Ho's dissertation on the foundations of Puṣṭi Mārga music and its contribution to classical styles is not only a landmark work from the ethnomusicology standpoint, but also provides a useful summary of secondary literature on the Sampradāya. After reviewing Richardson's work (Saha's was not yet available to her), Ho comments on the social-historical influences of the tradition:

Social relations with the reigning Mughal sovereigns (16th-18th centuries) and royal endowments from them, even more intimate dealings with Rajput rulers, and complex relationships with prosperous Gujarati merchants maintained the sect throughout five hundred years, cementing the impact of the Vaiṣṇava faith upon millions, and upon the institutions (commercial and political) that were the foundations of their societies.¹⁴

Norbert Peabody proposed, in a comprehensive and insightful study on the Kota kings, that the 18th century Kota regent Zalim Singh's parental-like control over the ruling king was based upon the Vallabh Sampradāya's notions of *sevā* in parental mode. Peabody later describes the insurrection in 1820 against Zalim Singh by the "infantilized" king Umed Singh's son and successor Kishor Madho Singh, who according to Peabody "demonstrated an even more sophisticated familiarity with the most important Vallabha treatises such as Vallabhacharya's *Subodhini*."¹⁵ While Peabody's work contributes a great deal to our understanding of the Sampradāya's historical influence in state affairs, his analysis is largely based on the conception that *vātsalya bhāva* (parental mood), a "hierarchically paradoxical sense of mutual interdependence existing between a helpless child-god and a protective parent-devotee...was the

¹³ "Meeting with other initiated members on a regular basis for the sharing of consecrated food and discussion of religious topics had the purpose of fostering and promoting solidarity within the community." *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁴ Ho, "The Liturgical Music of the Puṣṭi Mārg," 66.

¹⁵ Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity*, 56.

favoured emotional mode/mood governing devotional practice among the Puṣṭimargīs in western India.”¹⁶

This mischaracterization of the Sampradāya’s focus on *vātsalya bhāva* had been previously dispelled by Redington’s *Vallabhācārya on the Love Games of Krishna*, a skillful examination of Vallabhācārya’s *Subodhinī* text. Redington analyzed the text’s structure and content as well as the commentarial layers by the lineage’s most respected writers like Viṭṭhalanāth, Puruṣottama, Harirāya, Gokulnāth, and Lalu Bhaṭṭ, concluding that it is a “prevailing misconception...that the dominant emotional relationship of the devotee to Kṛṣṇa taught and practiced by Vallabha and his followers is that of ‘parental love’ (*vātsalyabhāva*) toward Kṛṣṇa as a baby or little child.”¹⁷ Redington’s additional translations of Vallabhācārya’s primary short “16 Treatises” (*Śoḍaṣagrānthāḥ*) were carried out with years of research and consultation with sampradāyik experts and reference to commentaries.¹⁸

Additional research pertaining to the Vallabha Sampradāya includes *Krishna’s Musicians*, Anne-Marie Gaston’s participant-observer’s study of the life of temple musicians in Nathdvara, Rajasthan. Her book examines the role of music, arts, and festivals in the Sampradāya’s temple worship, the professional and economic activities of the musicians and the development of Haveli Sangeet (a classical style of temple music) vis-à-vis the wider North Indian classical music tradition. With the premise that “understanding the sociology of hereditary north Indian musicians requires knowledge of their historical contexts,”¹⁹ Gaston also references colonial historical sources and contemporary scholarship. She chronicles the musicians’

¹⁶ Ibid., 142-3.

¹⁷ Redington, *Vallabhacarya on the Love Games of Krishna*, 21.

¹⁸ Redington, *The Grace of Lord Krishna*. I refer to his work throughout my analysis of *Śikṣāpatra*, a text which repeatedly cites the 16 treatises.

¹⁹ Gaston, 22.

extensive involvement in teaching, travel and performance (in religious and secular settings), handicraft production and shopkeeping, and temple guiding to supplement their income from dedicated temple service. Though the book's subject matter fits squarely into the field of ethnomusicology, its focus on the role of music and musicians in the religious context of the temple and the historical value of its themes of early modern mobility and patronage provide useful material for scholars of History and Religion as well. Scholars of South Asian history, for example, may take interest in Gaston's discussion of the mobility of Haveli Sangeet musicians across various courts and temples of North India.

In his sensitive fieldwork and study of Puṣṭi Mārg temple experience in Ujjain, Peter Bennett was able to recognize and override the emphases on hierarchy and purity common to prior anthropological studies. Bennett offered the following insightful perspective on food offerings and the deity-devotee rapport: "In Puṣṭi Mārg, as in many other bhakti cults, hierarchical distance becomes irrelevant when one considers the warmth and intimacy characteristic of the man-divine relationship."²⁰ Bennett challenged existing sociological theorizations which held that devotees accept the deity's sanctified leftovers (*prasāda*, imagined by the sociologists as impure remains of the deity's meal) in an exchange that serves to consciously reify a hierarchical relationship. Systems of ritual purity had even been similarly hypothesized as a means to avoid polluting the deity. Bennett's illumination of these gaps in scholarly understanding indicate the importance of eliciting indigenous understandings and theorization:

One of the most disconcerting experiences of early fieldwork was my realisation that the Brahmanical model I had absorbed from the anthropological literature imposed severe constraints on my interpretation of ritual and belief, not least by excluding devotees' own ideas about devotional matters. For example, on several occasions I suggested to priests that perhaps they maintained such scrupulous

²⁰ Bennett, 197.

regard for purity while preparing food offerings in recognition of the deity's superior hierarchical standing, a position subsequently reinforced by their consumption of the deity's leavings. But this neglected entirely the notion that the offering is principally an expression of selfless love and devotion, and the leftovers an embodiment of divine grace, untainted by mundane concerns for purity and status.²¹

Bennett discovered that in Puṣṭi Mārg, it is often not a purity/impurity binary which most influences the sevā methods. He found that in Puṣṭi temples, pre-offered foods are guarded from onlookers not primarily because of purity; rather, “the offering occupies a marginal state because it is ‘intended’ for Krishna but has not yet been accepted by Krishna. Should a devotee touch, see, or smell the offering-to-be, then he would effectively enjoy it before Krishna. This would be in contravention of the altruistic intention of seva, of the precept that everything should be offered to Krishna before enjoying it oneself.”²² Bennett's careful ethnographic work enabled him to discover such subtle distinctions firsthand. Arney, in his work on *Śikṣāpatra* itself, still assumed that, “If the temple offerings are touched, seen or smelled by anyone not in a state of *apras* [ritual purity] they become polluted and rendered unfit for Krishna.”²³ Perceptively, Bennett also discovered that temple food offerings must be prevented from being enjoyed audibly, as well as through other senses; hence the temple offerings and other items are all referred to by their Puṣṭi code words.

Vallabhācārya's philosophy is rooted in *bhakti*, a term for devotion which also suggests “participation,” as argued by Karen Pechilis: “In actively encouraging participation (which is a root meaning of *bhakti*), the poets represent *bhakti* as a theology of embodiment... embedded in the details of human life.”²⁴ Christian Novetzke further describes *bhakti* as the “subject of a

²¹ Ibid., 6.

²² Ibid., 139.

²³ Arney, 533.

²⁴ Pechilis, *Embodiment of Bhakti*, 6.

complex series of performances and mutual interactions that divides and unites” as well as a premodern discourse constituting “a locus for the creation of publics, not the formation of a single social or literary movement.”²⁵ These theorizations of the participatory, performative, unifying and divisive elements of bhakti are continuing to unfold in recent scholarship.

In arguing for bhakti as embodiment and “participation,” Karen Pechilis noted the pronounced process of localization through pilgrimage, regional language, poetic voice, and hagiography. The “embodied bhakti” she outlines maintains a tension between *differences*, by focusing on specific details of region, language, individual saints, etc., and *sameness*, given its “central metaphor...the belief that the human heart is the same everywhere.”²⁶ Accordingly, the rasa aesthetics from which Vallabha’s bhakti at times explicitly draws are based on the concept that emotional reactions to dramatic stimuli are universal, and his bhakti path proclaims its inclusivity regardless of gender, caste, and class. But as Novetzke reminds us, “the creation of shared publics is also always a creation of differences between different publics,”²⁷ and indeed Vallabha carefully distinguishes various groups of bhakti practitioners from outsiders and from each other. Vallabhācārya’s bhakti is experienced only by the select grace-filled *puṣṭi jīvas*, expressly contrasted by Vallabhācārya with “lawful” souls oriented towards rule-based religious practices (*maryādā bhakti*) and those who simply lack the inclination to participate in bhakti—the “worldly” *pravāhī jīvas*. Vallabhācārya’s philosophical tenets concerning the bhakta’s body and the community of puṣṭi bhaktas were adapted into the localized idiom of a burgeoning bhakti

²⁵ Novetzke, “Bhakti and Its Public,” 266.

²⁶ Pechilis, 41.

²⁷ Novetzke, 263.

tradition, centered around the above-mentioned vārtā literature, whose saints are analogous figures to Pechilis’s “regional language bhaktas.”²⁸

Attention must be given here as well to the Vallabha Sampradāya’s philosophy, which pervades all genres of its extensive literary output. The distinguishing element of religious philosophies is often, somewhat surprisingly, their interpretation of the material world. Vallabhācārya’s pure non-dualism (*Śuddhādvaita*) aligns itself against the *Advaita* of Śankarācārya, who argued that the world is ultimately false, a product of illusory *māyā*.²⁹ For Vallabhācārya, the world (*jagat*) is not only real, but also the precious locus of *nirodha* or “constraint” amounting to total divine focus.

In Vallabhācārya’s writings, the physical body is of central philosophical, theological, and practical concern. For example, religious practice in the Sampradāya is formulated as *sevā*, service usually to the physical form of Krishna, as well as the guru and other bhaktas, which is to be performed with one’s own body and material resources.³⁰ The traditional preoccupation with renunciation, meanwhile, is undermined by Vallabha’s suggestion that renouncing desire, lust, and negative association (including association with *anyamārgīyas*, those who follow other paths) is preferable to renouncing one’s home and family life. Theologically, Vallabhācārya depicts the *puṣṭi jīvas*, those souls oriented towards grace, as having emanated from the body of

²⁸ “The biographies of regional-language bhaktas elaborate on the sense of active participation that is emphasized in their poetry. The biographies embody the ‘I’ of the poetry by providing details of identity, pilgrimage, discourse, and interaction with other bhaktas.” Pechilis, 36. The hagiographic works of the Vallabha Sampradāya likewise feature poetry prominently, with the relevant details often seemingly constructed around the poems themselves.

²⁹ Smith’s discussion of these points in his analysis of Vallabhācārya’s *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābheda* and its commentaries are lucid. For example: “Vallabhācārya sees *māyā* as a power intimately related, indeed inseparable, from the Lord”; “the phenomenal world is real.” Smith, “Predestination and Hierarchy,” 198.

³⁰ As Vallabhācārya states in *Siddhānta-Muktāvalī* (*Pearl Necklace Teachings*):

kr̥ṣṇa-sevā sadā kāryā mānasī sā parā matā | cetastatpravaṇam sevā tatsiddhyai tanuvittajā ||

“Kṛṣṇa’s *sevā* should always be done; superior is *mānasī* (mental) *sevā*, the threading of one’s consciousness into Kṛṣṇa, which is perfected through *tanuvittajā sevā* (*sevā* with one’s own body and wealth).” Jhālā, *Puṣṭividhānam*, 167. My translation.

the Supreme Being, and he expressly utilizes the *rasa* aesthetic principles, based on physical performance, in his theorization of Krishna līlā. Further scholarly analysis of the body of bhaktas in the Vallabha Sampradāya, beyond the scope of this paper, may contribute to theorization of the body in a manner that, as called for by Barbara Holdrege, generates “analytical categories and models that are grounded in the distinctive idioms of religious traditions.”³¹

The Vallabha Sampradāya addresses one of the central questions of Hindu religious thought—the relationship between *Brahman* and *ātman*—by describing living beings (*jīvas*) as *Bhagavadamśa*: portions of the Supreme Being which emanate from him like sparks from a fire. In the *Śuddhādvaita* philosophy of Vallabhācārya, the individual, God, and the world are of a singular divine nature. The power of illusion (*māyā*) and alternating processes of concealment and manifestation (*tirobhāva* and *āvirbhāva*) are the forces responsible for the seeming creation and disappearance of perceptible phenomena. Ignorance and impurity can obstruct the individual’s experience of innate bliss and union, while feelings of separation (*viraha*) are cherished as a means of bridging the perceived gap. The created world and all its names and forms, according to Vallabhācārya, are real. They are in fact a second, manifest aspect of the unmanifest Brahman.³² Vallabhācārya’s worldview was by no means escapist or negative towards the physical universe. K. Narain states this point clearly in his recent monograph on Vallabhan philosophy: “The Vallabhites being realists to the core, are ardent advocates of the philosophy of the independence of the external world, which, as they explain, is in its name and form a particular manifestation of Brahman.”³³

³¹ Barbara A. Holdrege, “Body Connections,” 345.

³² *paraṁ brahma tu kṛṣṇo hi sacchidānandakaṁ bṛhat /
divirūpaṁ taddhi sarvaṁ syād ekaṁ tasmād vilakṣaṇaṁ //* Vallabhācārya, *Siddhānta-Muktāvalī* 3.

³³ Narain, *Philosophy of the Vallabha School*, 123.

Philosophical tenets of any living tradition can present significant challenges to layman and pundits alike. Richard Barz’s seminal work on the Puṣṭi Mārga, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya*, an impressive, sensitive and comprehensive overview of the tradition, including some of the first translations of its vārtā literature, was not immune to such difficulties. Barz suggested that the main feature of Vallabhācārya’s *bhaktimārga* is a “severance” between the *laukika* (worldly, profane) and *alaukika* (otherworldly, divine), and that,

The *bhakti* movement in general and Vallabhācārya’s movement in particular did not look favourably upon the ordinary world; the goal of the *bhaktimārga* was to replace the *laukika* with the *alaukika* and it was for *sharaṇam*, refuge from the world, that the *sevakas* who followed Vallabhacarya came to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.³⁴

Barz’s interpretation of the crucial concept of *śaraṇa* as ‘refuge *from* the world’ does not exactly match with the Sampradāya’s conception of *śaraṇa* as ‘refuge *in* Kṛṣṇa,’ as clearly expressed in its initiatory mantra, “*śrīkṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇam mama—Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my refuge.*” In a tradition like the Puṣṭi Mārga, which considers the world itself as one of Kṛṣṇa’s own forms and the place in which to seek and ultimately find him, there is no need for refuge *from* the world, which would amount to refuge *from* Kṛṣṇa.

Barz correctly notes that, according to Vallabhācārya’s *Śuddhādvaita* philosophy, “the problem of *samsāra* is a problem of wrong understanding and wrong mental outlook and not of physical origin—since the *jagat* on which the *jīva* projects *samsāra* is real.”³⁵ At other times, however, he seems to conflate the physical world (*jagat*)—considered to be the *ādhibhautika* form of Brahman/Kṛṣṇa—with the illusory, mundane world falsely conceived by the limited self, for which Vallabhācārya uses the terms *laukika* and *samsāra*.³⁶ Barz describes,

³⁴ Barz, *The Bhakti Sect*, 40-1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁶ As Barz describes, “This *samsāra* that Vallabhācārya holds to be unreal is not a physical state or material plane; it is a mental attitude that is false but is held by the *jīvas* to be true, it is the ignorant interpretation of the nature of reality.” *Ibid.*, 70.

The step from the *ādhibhautik* view (which is the *laukika* view) to the *ādhyātmika*...and the step from the *ādhyātmika* attitude to the *ādhidaivika* point of view (which is the perfect *alaukika* attitude) brings one to the goal of the Puṣṭimārga: the practice of constant, love-filled *sevā* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is the *dharma* of every *jīva*.³⁷

The equations of *ādhibhautika* with *laukika* and of *ādhidaivika* with *alaukika* do not hold in the light of Vallabhācārya's *Śuddhādvaita* philosophy. Barz's view underlies a subtle but significant tendency to remove spirituality and religious life from this world, analyzing it instead in terms of otherworldly aims. The contribution of the *Śikṣāpatra* authors and commentators which I will highlight below is that some spiritual texts aim not for transcendence of this world, but rather the experience of divinity in the world.

John Hawley's studies on the poet Sūrdās have necessarily described elements of the Vallabha Sampradāya, the lineage erroneously associated with the poet, according to his findings. Among Hawley's many other insights are the following take on the Vallabhan perspective on the world: "In his '*Samnyāsanirṇaya*' [Vallabhācārya] rejects any form of renunciation other than the self-renunciation that is experienced naturally in the hearts of those who love Krishna when he is absent. Love in separation is held up as the true form of ascetic renunciation (*saṁnyāsa*), and the *gopīs* as model renunciants."³⁸ Hawley's perspective reaffirms that the Vallabhan bhakta does not aim to retreat from the world as suggested by Barz, but rather, experiences a natural renunciation of worldliness due to overwhelming love and separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Ho has noted that, "In philosophy, Frederick M. Smith has made significant and lone strides in explication Vallabhācārya's obtuse writings, which remain in difficult Sanskrit."³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., 15.

³⁸ Hawley and Sūradāsa, *Sūr Dās: Poet, Singer, Saint*, 103.

³⁹ Ho, 28.

Accordingly, I will refer to Smith’s skillful interpretations in my translations of the *Śikṣāpatra* below. Smith has examined in exhaustive detail Vallabhācārya’s use of the term *nirodha*, a concept which clearly expresses the great philosopher’s orientation of spirituality in the world. Rather than “constraint of the senses,” as in the yogic systems, Vallabhācārya’s *nirodha* is a process of forgetting the false world and cultivating attachment instead to *līlā*, the divine play of Kṛṣṇa. The *līlā* is an idealized realm devoid of worldliness, yet it is still theorized as taking place in the real world of manifested existence. Vallabhācārya defines *nirodha* in his *Bhāgavatārthaprakaraṇa* text as *prapañcavismṛti-bhagavadāsaktiḥ*⁴⁰—forgetfulness of the mundane, false world of *prapañca* and attachment (*āsakti*) to Kṛṣṇa. Harirāyaji added in his commentary on Vallabhācārya’s *Nirodhalakṣaṇa* (*The Nature of Nirodha*) that *nirodha* “is not simply forgetfulness of the world; in fact it is the ability to experience with the senses what lies beyond the relative world...*vastutas tu prapañcātītasya api aindriyakatvam eva.*”⁴¹ As Smith noted, for Vallabhācārya, *nirodha* “denotes the very pinnacle of devotional ecstasy and engagement,”⁴² and the experience of *līlā* (divine play).

In Vallabhācārya’s bhakti, according to Smith, “*nirodha* grows out of the experience of *sānubhāva*, a state of divine participation in which both body and mind are immersed in the experience of the Lord’s *līlā*.”⁴³ This designation of *sānubhāva* as “participation” corroborates Pechilis’s definition of bhakti as such, and it finds clear expression in the hagiographic texts of the 252 *Vaishnavas*, followers of Vallabhācārya’s son Viṭṭhalanāthajī. The 252*V* texts frequently report that Krishna begins to share experiences, or participate (*sānubhāva jatāvate*) with these most accomplished of bhaktas, due to their excellent sevā, or simply supreme grace. The wife of

⁴⁰ Smith, “*Nirodha* and the *Nirodhalakṣaṇa* of Vallabhācārya,” 497.

⁴¹ Smith, “*Nirodha*,” 503-04.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 420.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 501.

the bhakta Kṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭ, for example, “remained immersed in Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sevā and was such an intimate follower of the Lord (*bhagavadīya*) that Kṛṣṇa would share many experiences with her (*Śrīṭhākurjī vāsoṅ bahot sānubhāva jatāvate*).”⁴⁴

Considering the above emphases on bodily and real-world experience of the divine attested in the Vallabha Sampradāya’s philosophical literature, I am inclined to question the underlying perspectives in the only existing scholarship on *Śikṣāpatra* by Paul Arney. Arney’s analysis of a portion of the *Śikṣāpatra*’s first letter is a pioneering work and important contribution to existing scholarship on the Sampradāya’s literature. However, it is striking that the *Śikṣāpatra*’s readers, in Arney’s understanding, are transported far from the real world by the act of service to the physical form (*svarūpa*) of Kṛṣṇa: “The [Kṛṣṇa] svarup functions as a portal into *another dimension*. For when advanced practitioners of seva are able to offer themselves without hesitation or reservation to the svarup with an absolute faith that the form they are seeing before them is, in reality, Krishna himself, they are *carried away* in ecstasy, *transported* into that *transcendental* realm of divine play, or *līlā*.”⁴⁵

In light of the practical, real world emphasis of Vallabhācārya’s philosophy, one can reasonably question whether the *Śikṣāpatra*’s focus is truly on such “essentially mystical” understandings as Arney suggested: “For genuine devotees, the point is not how to assimilate a particular body of religious doctrine to one’s own mode of rational understanding but how to affect an inner transformation that will enable one to know ultimate truth in an essentially mystical manner. And this is where a text like the *Baḍe Shikshāpatra* (‘The Great Epistles’) is relevant.”⁴⁶ Rather, of seemingly greater importance to the *Śikṣāpatra* authors and commentators

⁴⁴ Gokulnāthajī and Harirāyājī, *Do Sau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, Vol. 1, 60.

⁴⁵ Arney, 507. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 505-6.

is conveying a way to know ultimate truth in an essentially *practical* manner. This is evidenced in the portions of the text I have presented below, particularly in the concept of anxiety. By explaining the faith-centered reasons and methods of overcoming worldly anxieties, the *Śikṣāpatra*'s two authors have presented each other and their readers practical guidelines for living a spiritually fulfilling life in this world. Before examining the *Śikṣāpatra* text in more detail, I will suggest in the following section the potential relevance of spiritual perspectives on anxiety to the fields of medicine and mental health.

Spirituality and Bhakti in Clinical Literature

Is there a place for studies on bhakti literature in the world of medical and mental health research? H.G. Koenig noted in a review of research literature on religion, spirituality, and mental health that “religious and spiritual factors are increasingly being examined in psychiatric research.”¹ Koenig attributes the prior absence of tandem studies of psychiatry and religion to the late 19th century influence of Charcot and Freud, who “began to associate religion with hysteria and neurosis. This created a deep divide that would separate religion from mental health care.”² In recent decades, spirituality and health has been the topic of extensive medical and mental health research, but bhakti literature has not been widely represented in such studies. An exception is David Wolf's 1999 dissertation on the effects of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra* on stress and depression.³ Wolf utilizes the Vedic Personality Inventory (VPI), a measurement scale designed to assess spirituality on the basis of the three material modes of nature, called *guṇas* in

¹ Koenig, “Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health,” 283.

² *Ibid.*, 284. Others have similarly noted that, “Psychoanalysis, which pathologized or dismissed the psychological dimensions of religious experience, was the dominant intellectual framework in which psychiatry evolved during the first half of the twentieth century.” Freinkel and Lake, “Religious Beliefs, Spirituality, and Intention,” 367.

³ Wolf, “A Psychometric Analysis of the Three Guṇas.” Wolf's arguments are somewhat undermined by his extremely liberal use of the label “Vedic literature” in reference to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the medieval bhakti texts *Bhakti Rasāmṛtasindhu* and *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*.

Ayurveda. Wolf reviews clinical findings, concluding that “Research has consistently found that meditation and mantra chanting are related to decreased stress and anxiety levels.” But the need for further studies remains. As Wolf notes, although such methods have been correlated with “physiological outcomes, such as blood pressure and heart rate...it is not clear from the research whether these psychological and physiological effects are due to the intervention or some other factor, such as contact with therapist or a placebo effect.”⁴

In medical studies, attempts have been made to link specific physiological indicators (e.g., blood pressure and cortisol levels) to religious beliefs. Tartaro et al., found that the “magnitude of an individual’s religious identification may be less important for exerting a protective effect on physiological outcomes than simply the presence of some degree of religious commitment.”⁵ That religious commitment outweighs identification suggests that elements like faith and practice, rather than simply communal affiliation, may be more significant elements of healthy spirituality. These same authors succinctly summarize the difficulties inherent to the study of spirituality and medicine:

The construct of spirituality represents a unique challenge to research, as its variable and personal nature makes it difficult to assess. The use of global indices to assess spirituality has in fact been criticized.⁶ Yet this diversity in meanings also represents the ‘greatest strength’ of spirituality as an indicator of internalized belief systems⁷...It will be important for future research to more closely examine the health impact of functional aspects of religious or spiritual commitments, such as prayer and forgiveness.”⁸

The above authors have called for greater attention to functional aspects of spirituality.

This is in part what I have tried to accomplish by highlighting practical remedies for anxiety in

⁴ Wolf, “A Psychometric Analysis.”

⁵ Tartaro, Luecken, and Gunn, “Exploring Heart and Soul,” 762.

⁶ Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott, “The Emerging Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality.”

⁷ Shahabi et al., “Correlates of self-perceptions of spirituality.”

⁸ Tartaro, Luecken, and Gunn, “Exploring Heart and Soul,” 764.

the spiritual *Śikṣāpatra* text. The potential contribution of bhakti literature to medical studies is further evidenced in researchers' appeals for research incorporating more diverse religious demographics. Powell et al. argue that "a relationship between religion or spirituality and physical health does exist but that it may be more limited and more complex than has been suggested by others. Large voids in this literature exist not only in availability of studies pertinent to specific hypotheses but also in availability of studies of individuals who are not from Judeo-Christian backgrounds."⁹

Other psychology researchers have pointed out the importance of spiritual role models and narratives. Oman and Thorensen note that "potentially influential models include not only family and community, but also people encountered through the electronic media, reading, and storytelling."¹⁰ Correspondingly, in the *Śikṣāpatra*, the teachers and authors Harirāyājī and Gopeśvarjī themselves become the role models as they discuss their own life challenges and spiritual remedies. Their story is the frame narrative within which a variety of intertextual references to sampradāyik and other literary sources are inserted. Most often these are references to stories of legendary figures in bhakti. The daily reading of the *Śikṣāpatra* text (a practice followed by many Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas) then becomes the daily 'capital' referred to by Oman and Thorensen:

Most religious traditions rely heavily on *narratives* for transmitting spiritual 'data.' If we succumb, however, to a scholastic preoccupation with beliefs and doctrines, then we risk missing a great deal of the spiritual capital that is available and transmitted every day within religious traditions. Indeed, by relying heavily on narratives, traditions may have chosen a very effective strategy.¹¹

⁹ Powell, Shahabi, and Thoresen, "Religion and spirituality," 50.

¹⁰ Oman and Thorensen, "How Does One Learn to be Spiritual?" 40-1.

¹¹ Ibid., 42-3.

Hill and Pargament argued for the “possibility that something inherent within the religious and spiritual experience itself contributes to or detracts from physical and mental health.”¹² They contrast “inherent” components with “global religion and spirituality measures, such as denominational affiliation, church attendance, frequency of prayer, or self-rated religiousness and spirituality.”¹³ The thrust of their article is that, “It is possible that improvements in the measurement of mediators or the discovery of other psychological, social, or physiological mediating factors may eventually explain the religion and spirituality–health connection. There is, however, another possibility: Religiousness and spirituality may have direct effects on health.”¹⁴ These conclusions suggest the value of considering internal perspectives of bhakti texts. Hence I have attempted to evaluate the spiritual remedies for anxiety described in *Śikṣāpatra* on their own terms, and with consideration of the interpretations by authorities within the tradition. The correspondences between descriptions of clinical anxiety in medical literature and of spiritual anxiety in the *Śikṣāpatra*, as further elucidated in the final section of this thesis, suggest that similar studies of bhakti literature may contribute to the field of spirituality and medicine.

The Text of *Śikṣāpatra*

The standard received text of the canonical *41 Baḍe Śikṣāpatra*, the “41 Great Teaching Letters,” comprises 41 Sanskrit verse letters composed by Śrī Harirāyaṅ Mahāprabhu (1590~1715? CE), one of the most recognized and revered figures in the Vallabha Sampradāya’s history, along with a Brajhbhāṣā commentary composed by their original recipient, Harirāyaṅ’s

¹² Hill and Pargament, “Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality,” 66.

¹³ Ibid., 68.

¹⁴ Ibid., 71.

younger brother Śrī Gopeśvarjī (1593 CE - ?). Great-great grandson of the Sampradāya's founding philosopher, Śrī Vallabhācārya Mahāprabhu (1479-1531 CE), Harirāyajī is the only other figure in the lineage to whom the honorific "Mahāprabhu" is attached. The clear linkage of authority between the two is also related to authorship. Harirāyajī is among the most prolific authors in a family line that highly values literature and may have produced more of it than any other family in the world.

Śikṣāpatra is an established piece of sacred literature, a text which comes to life through private and public performance. It is read aloud in daily gatherings of Vaiṣṇavas, and devotional adherents cite and follow the various home remedies it prescribes. *Śikṣāpatra* integrates other sacred texts through frequent citations and quotes from several streams of Vaiṣṇava religious literature, including the four scriptural "canons of authority"¹ or *śabda pramāṇas* of the Sampradāya (the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Brahma Sūtras*, and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), as well as the writings of Vallabhācārya and the Sampradāya's Vaiṣṇava hagiographies (84V and 252V). In this way it becomes a condensed encyclopedia or manual of spirituality for followers of the Puṣṭi Mārga.

As an encompassing model for all aspects of the bhakta's worldly and spiritual life, the *Śikṣāpatra*, like the hegemonic texts defined by Inden, "accounts for all the elements that the relevant knowing public wants to know about."² Adding to the comprehensive and didactic effect of the *Śikṣāpatra* is the authors' formulaic style of posing and answering questions. The answers to doubts introduced in constructions like *ab koī pūrvapakṣ/sandeh kare jo* "If one should raise the objection/doubt that..." are provided with corresponding formulas like *yā bhānti koī kahe*

¹ Narain, *The Philosophy of the Vallabha School*, 201-2. This extensive work is an extremely careful, thorough presentation of Vallabhācārya's philosophical system with comparison to other Indian philosophies.

² Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," 417.

tahān Śrī Harirāyajī kahata hain jo “Should someone speak in this way, here Śrī Harirāyajī answers...”³

Śikṣāpatra often frames spiritual issues in medical terms and analogies. The remedies prescribed for spiritual crises include reading and listening to sacred texts, association with other practitioners and avoidance of devotional detractors. Anxiety as a significant devotional obstruction emerges as a consistent theme throughout the work. References to Śrī Vallabhācārya’s teachings on the subject of anxiety are frequently provided by the *Śikṣāpatra* authors. The two letters I have selected for translation feature numerous references to *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*), Vallabhācārya’s short teaching on the topic of anxiety.

An underlying theme of finding relief from anxiety and grief is expressed by the popular narrative of the *Śikṣāpatra*’s composition. According to popular belief (expressed, for example, by the editors of the 20th century VMM editions of *Śikṣāpatra*), Harirāyajī had a premonition of the imminent death of Gopeśvarjī’s wife and wrote the letters to console him. I do not find evidence in the text itself for such an exact scenario, other than Harirāyajī’s reference in 6.1 that “The news received of the ruin in your home was like poison to my ears.”⁴ It could also be the case that Śrī Harirāyajī simply knew from prior correspondence with his brother Gopeśvarjī that his wife had taken ill. In addition to this historically constructed purpose of eliminating anxiety, *Śikṣāpatra* clearly features extensive actual content on that subject.

The traditional belief is that Gopeśvarjī received but stashed away the entire series of 41 letters, only to read and comment on them after the passing of his wife. However, as R.G. Shah has noted, Śrī Harirāyajī’s references to Gopeśvarjī’s replies and other news seem to indicate that

³ Cf. *Śikṣāpatra* 3.14, 23.10, etc.

⁴ *grhabhaṅga samācārāḥ śrutāḥ śruti viśāyitāḥ*

Gopeśvarjī had read and replied to some of the letters before the others were received.⁵ One must also wonder whether the current order of the letters is strictly chronological or has been arranged in some other progression. The more detailed review of available manuscripts necessary to answer such an inquiry lies beyond the scope of this study. In any case, the theme of anxiety removal is of course relevant to the present exploration of the practical and potentially anxiety-reducing effects of spiritual literature. The following discussion of historical context for the *Śikṣāpatra* provides further clues as to the circumstances of the *Śikṣāpatra*'s composition and analyzes arguments regarding potential motivations behind other vernacular works by Śrī Harirāyajī.

Historical Context

I begin here with a brief biographical treatment of *Śikṣāpatra* authors Harirāyajī and Gopeśvarjī and a sketch of the historical context of the text at hand. More information is available for the elder brother, Harirāyajī, owing to his fame as a scholar, teacher and prolific author within the Sampradāya. Shah's monograph on Śrī Harirāyajī, despite his cursory treatment of the *Śikṣāpatra* text itself (only a one sentence summary of each letter), provides some historical context and other useful insights. He identifies the obvious didactic nature of the text (surprisingly absent from Arney's discussion of the text) as follows: "In every letter from the *Śikṣāpatras*, [the reader] finds consoling and guiding spirit of a preachers, gracefully soothing his distressed heart... Thus, every *Śikṣāpatra* is didactic."¹

The lengthy life span of 120 or 125 years attributed to Harirāyajī by his tradition is doubted as proverbial. His birth in Gokul in 1591 CE (Kṛṣṇa Bhādrapada 5, V.S. 1647) is

⁵ Shah, *Vallabha Cult and Śrī Harirāyajī*, 79.

¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

accepted by most within the tradition and supported by poetic references, according to R.G. Shah's examination of relevant Hindi and Gujarati sources.² Shah was not convinced by the date 1593 given by Dāsguptā in his *History of Indian Philosophy* due to its variance from the date agreed upon by other scholars of the Puṣṭi Mārga tradition. Harirāyājī's passing in 1716 CE is suggested by Ṭaṇḍana,³ while Mīṭala (1962) gives the terminal date 1711 CE.⁴ Shah however refers to the Gujarati source *Śrī Harirāyājī Mahāprabhujīnu Jīvancaritra*⁵ in giving a terminal date for Harirāyājī in the range of 1716-1721 CE and notes, "As the exact date of his death is not traced from the papers of the cult, the above period of his death seems probable from the dates, written on his portraits and pictures."⁶

There is no clear evidence for the *Śikṣāpatra* letters' precise dates of composition within the text itself. Harirāyājī refers to the passing of his father in 40.9, but the terminal dates of Kalyāṇrāyājī are not known, so that provides no reliable evidence. Shah further suggests the possibility that Harirāyājī might have written the letters from Gujarat, based on *Śikṣāpatra* 40.25-27. In these verses, Harirāyājī describes a scandalous affair between his manager (*adhikārī*) and a young girl (*yuvati*). Gopeśvarjī's commentary seems to elaborate that the girl was a widow from Sūrat, but that does not conclusively suggest that Harirāyājī and his manager were residing in Sūrat:

In this way, he fell under the sway of a young girl. At some time he found an opportunity in Sūrat and had a relationship with a widow. No one knew about this. Then the widowed woman became pregnant. Having done this the woman and the manager became very troubled in their minds, "Now what will happen?"

² Ibid., 50-1.

³ Cf. Barz, *The Bhakti Sect*, 4.

⁴ Cf. Barz, *The Bhakti Sect*, 42.

⁵ Parīkh, *Śrī Harirāyājī Mahāprabhujīnu Jīvancaritra*, 57.

⁶ Shah, 90.

Then the two of them together administered many medicines and the foetus was destroyed.⁷

In terms of the religious and social structure of the *Śikṣāpatra* authors' lineage, it is noteworthy that Harirāyajī was the head of the 2nd house of the Vallabha Sampradāya, meaning that he descends from the second of 7 sons born to Śrī Gusāñjī, the son of Vallabhācārya. There are 8 houses (*grha* or also, *pīṭh*) in the lineage, corresponding to the house of Śrī Gusāñjī (*pradhān pīṭh*) and those of each of his seven sons (*pratham-saptam pīṭh*). The eldest male lineage holder of each main *pīṭh* is also in possession and control of one of the primary Kṛṣṇa deities of the lineage, called treasured forms or *nidhi svarūpas*. The sevā of an additional nidhi, Śrī Nāthjī is led by the head of the *pradhān pīṭh*.

Harirāyajī was born in Gokul but was to travel widely in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Sindh.⁸ Harirāyajī's *baithaks* ("seats," or teaching sites, now commemorated by small temples) are found in Gokul, Jambusar, Sāvālī, Dākor, Nāthadvārā, Khimnor, and Jaisalmer.⁹ As an influential and well-traveled spiritual figure, Harirāyajī would likely have been in contact with and in the favor of political leaders. R.G. Shah reports that Harirāyajī met on occasion with King Rāyasimha of Udaipur, who granted Harirāyajī land in Khimnor, as well as the King of Jaisalmer (either Rāvala Amarasimha or Rāvala Manohardās).¹⁰ Though I am unable to verify his sources and attest to their validity, according to Shah, Harirāyajī first came into contact with Rāyasimha when travelling from Braj to Simhād (Nāthadvārā), Mevād in 1659 CE.¹¹ Shandip Saha mentions the seemingly same king regarding a later deal with the head of the Puṣṭi Mārga's *pradhān pīṭh*:

⁷ *yā prakār yuvatīke vās hoy koī samay pāy sūratgām men vidhavā ke sang sambandh karat bhayo, so koī yā bāt kon jānata nāhīn, so vah vidhavā strī kon garbh rahi gayo, tākariken vah strī aur adhikārī man men mahāduḥkhī bhaye, jo ab kaisī hoyegī? pāchen dou miliken anek auśadhi kariken garbh girāvat bhaye.*

⁸ Shah, 78.

⁹ Ibid., xi.

¹⁰ Ibid., 82.

¹¹ Ibid., 84.

“In 1672 Mewar’s ruler, *mahārāṇā* Rāj Siṃh (r. 1653-80) offered the *tilkāyat* a fiefdom of his own with the assurance of continued financial support and military protection.”¹² The likelihood of an earlier connection between Harirāyajī and Rāj Siṃh seems possible considering Saha’s mention (drawing on the work of a Mewar chronicler)¹³ that “Rāj Siṃh’s father, Jagat Siṃh I (r. 1628–52) had taken initiation into the Puṣṭimārg when the community was still settled in Braj.”¹⁴

According to Shah, after meeting with Rāyasimha in 1659 Harirāyajī allegedly returned to Gokul for some years before leaving Braj during Aurangzeb’s 1669 CE incursions, settling at Khimnor in 1670 CE with his deity, the treasure-form (*nidhi svarūpa*) Viṭṭhalanāthajī.¹⁵ A temple for Viṭṭhalanāthajī was established in Khimnor by 1671 CE, around the same time a temple was constructed by Rāyasimha in nearby Kānkarolī for the 3rd house *nidhi svarūpa*, Dwārakādhīśajī. Both these predate the arrival of the more famous pradhān house *nidhi svarūpas*, Śrīnāthajī and Navanītapriyājī, in 1672 CE.¹⁶

Hawley notes regarding the political connections among Sampradāya that, “The involvement of the rulers of Mewar with the Sampradāya is abundantly clear and dates back to the middle of the seventeenth century, and there are good indications that a connection with the House of Bundi was established in the same period.”¹⁷ Saha, who has explored the political history of the Vallabha Sampradāya in detail, argues that Rāyasimha had both religious and political aims in protecting the Sampradāya within his kingdom:

Rulers of the Mewar royal house viewed it as their royal duty (*rājdharmā*) to protect a religious community with which they had longstanding ties. The second reason for sheltering the Puṣṭimārg, however, revolved around issues of state building. Rāj Siṃh was carrying out the economic and cultural reconstruction of

¹² Saha, “The Movement of *Bhakti* along a North-West Axis,” 304.

¹³ Ranachod. *Rājaprasasti Mahākāvya*. Udaipur: Sahitya Sansthan, 1973.

¹⁴ Saha, “Movement,” 311.

¹⁵ Shah, 78, 84-6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁷ Hawley and Sūradāsa, *Sūr Dās: Poet, Singer, Saint*, 51.

his state after years of warfare with the Mughals and was quite aware of the economic benefits that would accrue from housing a religious community whose principal devotees were wealthy merchants from nearby Gujarat.¹⁸

Similarly, Saha analyzes the Sampradāya's shift to Rajasthan from Braj, likely spearheaded in part by Śrī Harirāyajī around 1699, in terms of the mutual benefit to the religious community and political rulers:

When Mughal patronage of the community was threatened by political instability, the *mahārājas* adapted to their changing social circumstances by looking towards Rajasthan as a new source of patronage. Relocating to Rajasthan ensured the proximity of the community's *mahārājas* to their *baniyā* patrons as well as to Rājput rulers whose desire to shelter the Puṣṭimārg was an expression of religious commitment linked to the issues of prestige and state building.¹⁹

Beyond this broader political context described by Saha, the following discussion of authorial intent in the *Śikṣāpatra*, a text with extensive first person narrative, provides more detailed analysis of the personal, spiritual and practical motivations behind Harirāyajī's writings.

Authorial Intent

One foundational study on the Puṣṭi Mārga to which most later scholars refer is Richard Barz's above mentioned *Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya*. Barz suggests that "the notable factor that remains to be taken into account" in analyzing the early literature of the Vallabha Sampradāya is "the nature of the inspiration that lay within the hearts of the authors of that literature."¹ The *Śikṣāpatra*, because of its first person narrative and intimate epistolary framework, provides clear insights into the nature of its authors' inspirations. Śrī Harirāyajī discusses in several letters his own situation and concerns, including his lack of good association and entanglement in bad company,² which he graphically describes in 35.3: "My body, split to the core by the arrows of

¹⁸ Saha, "Movement," 311.

¹⁹ Saha, "Movement," 312.

¹ Barz, *The Bhakti Sect*, 9.

² Cf. *Śikṣāpatra* 4.23, 4.29, 8.6-11, 16.6-9, 19.5, 28.22, etc.

ill-speech of the wicked, itself nowhere attains ease and stability.”³ Elsewhere he recalls personal difficulties such as the passing of his father, “My respected father having gone (*yāteṣu*) unfortunately (*durbhagasya*) into the beyond (*parokṣatām*), and all the wise beings [similarly] having gone, both are far from sight—such is my state,”⁴ and a scandal involving his manager, after which he writes “Who can be trusted? Thus my mind is depressed.”⁵ In 16.9 Harirāyajī laments, “Who knows what compassionate-natured Bhagavān wishes to do? I don’t know, and from that my mind is always depressed.”⁶

Harirāyajī frequently describes his lowly state, as in “But we are always wicked and by nature turned away.”⁷ He elaborates this theme at great length in letter 37, beginning with the statement, “Neither indeed is there [in me] pure devotional mood, nor divine perception (*sarvabhāva*), nor humility, nor devotion to commands, faith, or deep respect.”⁸ He also describes the devotional complications which being flattered by people creates⁹ and the painful separation from saints and the blessed land of Vraja.¹⁰ Using a medical analogy, in 40.6 Harirāyajī laments, “What can the perfect medicine do for one whose breath is extinguished? Similarly, what can discussions (*kathā*), *sevā*, etc. again do for me, whose divine feelings (*bhāva*) are gone?”¹¹

³ *duṣṭānām durvacobāñairbhinnam marmāṇi madvapuh / na kvāpi labhate svāsthyam samāhitamapi svataḥ //*

⁴ *tāta pādeṣu yāteṣu durbhagasya parokṣatām / satsu sarveṣu yāteṣu dṛśordūramaham sthitaḥ //* Śikṣāpatra 40.9

Fathers and elders are referred to in this lineage by the respectful term *tātacaraṇa*, or here, the analogous, *tātapāda*, which associate the words for “elder/father” and “feet.”

⁵ *viśvāsaḥ kasya kartavya iti khinnam mano mama //* Śikṣāpatra 41.28a

⁶ *kiṁvā ko veda bhagavān karuṇātmā cikīrṣati / na jāne tena me cetaḥ khinnam bhavati sarvathā //*

⁷ *vayam tu sarvathā duṣṭāḥ svadharmavimukhā api /* 28.7a. Cf. 28.1-9.

⁸ *na śuddhabhāvo naivāsti sarvabhāvo na dīnatā / nājñāparatvam viśvāso cāsti paramādarah //* 37.1

The reflexive “in me” (*mayi*) is found in 37.8 at the end of a long list of similar demerits.

⁹ Cf. 21.6-8.

¹⁰ Cf. 19.6-9, 40, etc.

¹¹ *yathā niḥśvāsarahitam kiṁ karoti subheṣajam / tathā vigatabhāvam mām kathāsevādikam punaḥ //*

One of the clearest statements of Harirāyajī’s authorial intentions, and perhaps therefore interpreted as the legendary origin of the entire correspondence, as described above, is found in 6.1: “The news received of the ruin in your home [i.e. your wife’s passing] was like poison to my ears. For that reason what is written here is for the composure, to whatever extent, of [your] mind.”¹² In an earlier verse (3.16), presumably prior to receiving this unfortunate news, Harirāyajī had expressed to Gopeśvarjī his lack of personal motive in writing these letters: “This which has thus been written by me naturally with no self-interest, is to be always placed in the mind, with love, if one is so inclined.”¹³ In his commentary, however, Gopeśvarjī extends this statement beyond his own personal situation, ascribing its import ultimately to the contentment and joy of Kṛṣṇa rather than himself:

Now Śrī Harirāyajī completes this 3rd *Śikṣāpatra* to his brother Gopeśvarjī, stating therein, “I have written you these *Śikṣāpatra*, but don’t consider that I have written them because of our brotherly relationship, or out of some feeling of worldly self-interest in my mind. It is not just for the purpose of pleasing you. I have written them in a disinterested mood. Śrī Mahāprabhujī’s treasure [a svarūpa of Kṛṣṇa] resides in your home. So that a divine mood may arise in the sevā items [offered] to him, such that the experience of bliss will arise—for this reason I have written them.”¹⁴

Arney has perceptively observed in reference to *Śikṣāpatra*, “the production and consumption of the text as being part of an overlapping process in which the roles of author, commentator, and ‘target audience’ are deliberately blurred.”¹⁵ Indeed, in his commentary, Gopeśvarjī often writes in the narrative voice of his older brother, such that the two become indistinguishable. At times Gopeśvarjī directly introduces his interpretations of Harirāyajī’s

¹² *gr̥habhaṁgasamācārāḥ śrutāḥ śrutiviśāyitāḥ / tadarthaṁ likhyate kiṁcitsamādhānāya cetasaḥ // 6.1.*

¹³ *asmābhirevaṁ likhitaṁ nirapekṣaiḥ svabhāvataḥ / snehena sarvathā citte dhīyatām yadi rocate //*

¹⁴ *ab Śrī Harirāyajī apane bhāī Śrī Gopeśvarjī prati tṛtīya Śikṣāpatra saṁpūrṇa karata hain tāmen kahata hain jo yah Śikṣāpatra ham tumko likhe hain so tum yah mati jāniyo jo bhāī ke saṁbandh karike likhe hain athavā kachu laukik svārth ko bhāv yah man men hai, tumkon prasanna karive ke arth hū nāhī hai, nirapekṣabhāv son likhe hain, Śrī Mahāprabhujī kī nidhi ghar men virājata hain tinakī sevāsāmagrī men alaukik bhāva hoy to ānanda ko anubhava hoy yāten likhe hain.*

¹⁵ Arney, 512.

meanings with phrases like, “Now Śrī Harirāyajī says...”¹⁶ In his commentary on the pivotal verse 6.1, in which Harirāyajī had mentioned his brother’s loss, Gopeśvarjī gives yet another overview of the *Śikṣāpatra*’s content and purpose that is notably both spiritual and practical. In what can be construed as both his own and his brother’s voice, Gopeśvarjī remarks,

Therefore I write: accept the Lord’s wish. The root dharma is this, to remember the Lord in the heart and to become infused (*āveś*) with the Lord in such a way that he does not come out. So having read these letters, appease your mind. In these letters the actions to be taken in the world as well as the divine dharma are all described.¹⁷

Gopeśvarjī too indicates his own personal concerns and faults throughout the *Śikṣāpatra*, intimating for example in 9.20 that, “I am afflicted by worldly household and bodily connections, which are obstructions to the divine mood. Why? Because within bodily relationships and the home are worldly and scriptural duties. Agitation over them remains in the mind, and that is an obstruction.”¹⁸ Another common theme for the authors of *Śikṣāpatra* is *dāsya bhāva*, the mood of being a follower. Gopeśvarjī humbly states (5.2), “This fire of the mood of separation is not in my fate. Why? Because that fire rife with divine mood arises in the heart of one who has *dāsya* dharma. So *dāsya* dharma is extremely difficult and very rare, and humility is extremely rare. Because it is said that a *dāsa* is one who desires not his own pleasure, but that of his master.”¹⁹

¹⁶ “*ab Śrī Harirāyajī kahate hain.*” Cf. 37.1, 40.5, etc.

¹⁷ *Tāten ham likhata hain jo bhagavadicchāko grahaṇ karno, mūladharma yah hai jo hṛdayamen ten prabhu ko smaraṇ prabhu ko āveś jā prakār bāhir na jāy so karttavya hai, so patra vāmciken, cittako samādhān kariyo. yā patra men laukik kārya tathā bhagavaddharma sab varṇit hain.*

¹⁸ *hamkon ḡhadehasambandhī laukik ārtti hai so yah bhagavadbhāva men bādhak hai, kāheten, jo dehasambandhī ghar, tāmen laukik vaidik kārya hain, tākī ārtti man men rahata hai, so bādhak hai.* Also, cf. 13.9, 37.1, etc.

¹⁹ *Yah viprayog bhāvāgni mere bhāgya men to nāmhi hai, kāhaten jo yah bhāvātmak agni to dāsya dharma hoy tinaken hṛdaya men hoy. So dāsya dharma hū ati kaṭhin mahā durlabh hai aur dainya ati durlabh hai, so kahata hain jo svāmīko sukh cāhe, apāno na cāhe so dās.*

In his commentary on the final verse of the text, Gopeśvarjī explicitly dedicates his efforts to the Vaiṣṇavas, attributes his words to his older brother in a devotional-mood (*bhāvātmaka*) sense, and further connects the lineage of authorship and authority directly to the founder of the lineage, Śrī Vallabhācārya:

The followers of Shri Vallabha should always keep the teachings found in these 41 letters in their hearts. All of this effort has been for them alone... Blessed Harijīvandās!²⁰ Śrī Harirāyajī entered into your heart and removed my suffering. Don't consider this *Śikṣāpatra* commentary to have been composed by me; Śrī Harirāyajī, having entered into my heart, [himself] has composed it. For Śrī Ācāryajī and Śrī Gusāñjī forever reside in Śrī Harirāyajī's heart. From that, this divine mood has manifested. You are extremely clever; therefore keep this treasure extremely secret, for it is not appropriate to display it here and there (*Śikṣāpatra* 41.11).

Postulating an authorial “bhāva” coming from the founders and masters of the lineage in this way lends credibility and power to the text. As Hawley has discussed in the context of *bhakti* poetry,

In devotional Hindi poetry, to give an author's name is not so much to denote who said what as to indicate the proper force of an utterance and the context in which it is to be appreciated... The signatures in *bhakti* poems communicate much more than authorship. They lend these poems authority and conviction, and they establish an aura in which the act of listening can be as intense as the speech.²¹

Further formulations of authorship and intent internal to the *Śikṣāpatra* are evidenced in the 3rd letter. Here we find additional expression of the traditional literary trope—keeping teachings concealed except to the qualified—along with a more concrete chronicle (compared to the esoteric one above) of the textual lineage by which the teachings have been transmitted:

Letter 3, Verse 14

That which I have revealed above is to be always kept in mind.

It is not to be spoken of anywhere; nowadays people are turned away [from the Lord].

²⁰ Harijīvandās is the Vaiṣṇava who seems to have inspired Gopeśvarjī to pick up and read the letters from his older brother.

²¹ Hawley, “Author and Authority in Bhakti Poetry,” 287-8.

Commentary

Now, one might raise the objection, “You have just described all *sevā* items [*sevāsāmagrī*] as divine (*alaukik*). Do you say this from your own deduction (*yukti*) or from some text (*granth*)? Or did you hear it from someone?”

Should someone speak in that way, here Śrī Harirāyajī says to his younger brother and accepted disciples, “This I have heard from the elders. I have heard this from Śrī Gokulnāthjī, Śrī Kalyāṇrāyajī, and from the mouths of others, all of whom had experienced the nectar of divine mood (*bhāvanās*). Besides, Śrī Mahāprabhujī has expressed all the divine moods in his *Śrī Subodhinījī*. And Śrī Gusāñjī, in his works, has given the divine description of all the items in [Kṛṣṇa’s] divine play (*līlā*). And so with great love I relate to you: always keep these stories (*vārtā*) in your mind. Never at any time mistakenly understand [this as] worldly (*laukik*), and don’t speak of this divine mood before anyone. If someone accepted by you who has a pure heart and firm faith in Śrī Ācāryajī and Śrī Gusāñjī’s lotus feet, it is one’s duty to meet with them and contemplate divine [*sevā*] items (*padārtha*). And never discuss the essence (*bhāva*) of divine items with those people with worldly intelligence who are turned away (*vimukh*).”

In this brief analysis of expressions of authorial intent in the *Śikṣāpatra*, a range of themes are in evidence, including humility, secrecy, worldly despair and devotional malaise. A common thread is that the bhakta of this tradition must appease the concerns and worries of the mind, with firm faith, in order to experience the devotional mood or essence (*bhāva*) and act in a way pleasing to the divine. Though the ultimate orientation is towards Kṛṣṇa and his pleasure, and worldly and household relationships are identified as potential sources of obstruction, the basic context for the authors’ devotional descriptions and prescriptions clearly is this physical world and the bhaktas’ experiences in it.

Note on the present selection of *Śikṣāpatra* letters

I selected the two *Śikṣāpatra* letters translated below (letters 18 and 23) for their emphasis on the heart, anxiety, medical analogies, and prescriptive remedies for anxiety. Letter 18, comprising 17 verses, is labeled in some modern editions with the subject title “*viraha bhāvanā*—contemplating separation,” while Letter 23, also in 17 verses, is titled “*bahirmukhatā tyāga*—renunciation of the state of aversion [being turned away from the Lord].” *Śikṣāpatra* is

rife with intertextual references from Vedas, Upaniṣāds, Purāṇas, the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Ramāyaṇa*, Jayadeva’s *Gīta Govinda*, various works by Vallabhācārya and Gusāñjī, and the 84V and 252V vārtā literature of Gokulnāthjī and Harirāyajī. In particular, the two letters selected here contain frequent references to Vallabhācārya’s treatise *Navaratna*, which addresses anxiety directly.

Harirāyajī composed the *Śikṣāpatra* verses in *Anuṣṭubh* meter, or *śloka*, one which gave the author flexibility in composition and makes recitation for the reader relatively simple. *Śloka* is a syllabic meter, each half-verse containing 4 pādas of 4 syllables each (or 2 pādas with 8 syllables each), totaling 32 syllables per full verse. It is described by MacDonell as follows: “The Śloka (‘song,’ from śru, ‘hear’), developed from the Vedic Anuṣṭubh, is the Epic verse, and may be considered the Indian verse *par excellence*.”¹

MacDonell discusses 4 primary variations of śloka, the first of which is called “Pathyā” and the other three “Vipulā.” *Śikṣāpatra* features both types. In *śloka*, the 2nd and 4th pādas in particular have certain possible arrangements of short and long syllables. The fourth is always short, long, short, short/long, or in the notation utilized by MacDonell (◡ – ◡ •). The third pāda is always variable (• • • •). In the Pathyā type, the 1st pāda as well as the 3rd are both totally variable, while second is fixed as (◡ – – •). One of the three Vipulā variations given by MacDonell has two possibilities for 1st pāda combinations (which I will refer to as 2a and 2b).

The total five variations then are as follows:

1. Pathyā: •••• | ◡ – – • | •••• | ◡ – ◡ •
- 2a. Vipulā: • – ◡ – | ◡ ◡ ◡ • | •••• | ◡ – ◡ •
- 2b. Vipulā: • ◡ – – | ◡ ◡ ◡ • | •••• | ◡ – ◡ •
3. Vipulā: • – ◡ – | – ◡ ◡ • | •••• | ◡ – ◡ •
4. Vipulā: • – ◡ – | – – – • | •••• | ◡ – ◡ •

¹ MacDonell, *A Sanskrit grammar for students*, 232-3.

Examining the first few verses of *Śikṣāpatra* letter 18, we find a combination of these subtypes. The first half verse of 18.1 is type 3 Vipulā, and the second half is type 1 Pathyā, as follows:

• – √ – | – √ √ • | • • • • | √ – √ •
kālah svakāryam kurute na jānāti jano yataḥ /
 • • • • | √ – – • | • • • • | √ – √ •
pramādyati hareḥ kārye svātmakārye ’tividhvalaḥ //18.1//

The second verse of letter 18 begins with Pathyā and continues with the Vipulā meter of the subtype 2a:

• • • • | √ – – • | • • • • | √ – √ •
kevalaudarikatvam tu tadīyānām na cocitam /
 • – √ – | √ √ √ • | • • • • | √ – √ •
na pūrayet kimudaram sevakānām kṛpānidhiḥ //2//

In the third verse these are reversed, i.e. the first half is in Pathyā and the second seemingly type 3 Vipulā, with one variant syllable—*na*, followed by the conjunct *śca*—should be counted as long to adhere to this type (none of the others seems feasible):

• • • • | √ – – • | • • • • | √ – √ •
cintā kāpi na kāryeti prabhuvākyam vicintyatām/
 • – √ – | – √ √ • | • • • • | √ – √ •
ajñānino jñāninaśca yadi syāt samatā kṛtau //18.3//

Letter 23 begins with a verse with both halves in Pathyā:

• • • • | √ – – • | • • • • | √ – √ •
bhavantāḥ śrutāsiddhāntāḥ katham muhyanti laukike /
 • • • • | √ – – • | • • • • | √ – √ •
alaukike tu cintā yā viṣayābhāvato na sā //1//

Meter is the matter of a brief discussion in *Śikṣāpatra* when in Verse 23.3 Harirāyājī inserts a quote from Vallabhācārya which was composed in *āryā* meter. Gopeśvarjī comments on that fact, as I have discussed in a footnote to that passage. The translations of the Sanskrit root (*mūl*) verses of the *Śikṣāpatra* below are my own. Curved brackets { } indicate additional

information supplied by the editors of the SS 1915 edition, found in that text either within parentheses or within the Brajbhāṣā *śabdārtha* gloss of the Sanskrit verses. Straight brackets [] indicate words which I have inserted for syntactic purposes and clarification. Parentheses () indicate individual Sanskrit or Brajbhāṣā words actually present in the mūl, which I have supplied to indicate original terminology.

The reader will notice that I have varied the translation of certain terms in different contexts, in which cases I have tried to give the original term in parentheses for reference. One such term is *bhāva*, which can be used variously as existence, divine mood, or emotion. Trickier still is the term *bhāvanā*, which seems to have the sense of ‘reflection on *bhāva*.’ Some relevant interpretations of *bhāva* are found in secondary works such as Timm, who notes that, “Rather than a dimension of human experience to be denied, Vallabha embraces emotion as the preferred medium for experiencing God....Emotion (*bhāva*) is thus a means and an expression of transcendental (*alaukika*) experience.”² With reference to Vallabhācārya’s *Tattvārthadīpanibandha*, Timm adds, “It could be said that for Vallabha *rasa* (aesthetic and impersonal) provides an occasion for extraordinary *bhāva*: an intensely personal experience of emotional relationship with Krishna. Says Vallabha, ‘passion (*ratih*) having the divine as its object is called *bhāva*.’”³

A number of terms which we might call “key words” occur frequently throughout the *Śikṣāpatra* (e.g. *bhāva*, *sevā*, *cintā*, *cintana*, *mana*, *bhagavadīya*). These were included in the initial glossary and I have defined them briefly within the translations below. I will consistently translate *mana* as mind and *hṛdaya* as heart, although in certain contexts there is ambiguity as to

² Timm, “The Celebration of Emotion,” 66.

³ Timm, 67.

whether *mana* refers to the heart or the mind. In this text the authors' use of *citta* seems to closely straddle that boundary between heart and mind.

My translations of the two *Śikṣāpatra* letters are followed by an introduction to and translations of Prathameśjī's lectures (*vacanāmṛt*). Thereafter, in the analysis section I relate specific passages of these materials to my present inquiry into the practical nature of anxiety treatments in bhakti literature and their connection with medical studies.

Translation of *Śikṣāpatra* Letter 18

Introduction:

In the 18th *Śikṣāpatra* it is explained that it is not appropriate for devotees (*bhagavadīyana*) to work solely for the purpose of filling their stomachs. Rather, having felt separation and the force of Bhagavān everywhere, knowing all other creations other than his līlā creation to be devoid of bliss,¹ having applied some method of forgetting worldly affairs (*prapañca*),² one should establish Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the heart (*hṛdaya*). Do not consider anyone else to be equal to Śrīmad Ācāryajī, Śrī Gusāñjī, Śrī Svāminījī, etc. Above [in the previous letter] the ways of refuge (*śaraṇa*) and service (*sevā*) were explained, but people don't recognize the obstructions presented to these by the current day and age. The ways by which such knowledge can arise will now be explained:

¹ I suspect that at times there is some semantic blending between the verbal form *sphur* (*hṛdaya men āveśa ānā*) and the noun *sphūrṭi* (*tejī, phurtī*) (SBK3, 318), such that terms like *bhagavatsphūrṭi* may carry the sense of "the force of Bhagavān entering one's heart." However, that speculation aside, I have left *sphūrṭi* as "force."

² OHED, 661.

Verse 1

*kālah svakāryam kurute na jānāti jano yataḥ /
pramādyati hareḥ kārye svātmakārye ’tivilhvalaḥ //1//*

Time does its own thing; because people don’t understand [that], they are indifferent towards Hari’s work {*sevā*, etc.} and excessively wrapped up in their own personal activities.

Commentary (*tīkā*):

Time keeps doing its thing,³ moment by moment stealing away people’s longevity. The individual doesn’t realize that, “My lifespan is decreasing day by day; time is continually taking it away.” Lacking this knowledge, people therefore indulge in their own activities.⁴ They are seized by anxiety over many worldly and Vedic duties, *sāmsārik* desires, the nourishment of the body and senses, lust (*viśaya*)⁵ and so forth, and therefore are negligent. In so doing, they don’t know that, “Time devours one’s entire life. What will become of me? What am I to do?” Lacking this knowledge, they indulge in various activities and are engrossed (*vihval*) in their own doings. They are immersed in activities related to the body and mundane existence, rather than immersed

³ The Subodhinī Sabhā edition [SS 1915] uses a variant orthography with the forms *he* and *hen* where the VMM edition uses *hai* and *hain*. Likewise, in SS 1915 *or* can be seen in place of *aur*.

⁴ This usage of *pramādyati*, seeming to connote a negative behavior—remaining delighted by, or indulging in, one’s own (mundane) activities—seems to conflict with its usage in Harirāyājī’s mūl śloka, in which the word order and the SS 1915 editor’s translation both suggest that its verbal form, *pramādyati*, refers to being “negligent of” or indifferent towards Hari’s duties (glossed as *sevā*, etc.). “Indulging in” and “being negligent of” an activity would seem contradictory, but *pramāda* seems to incorporate both meanings for these authors, and according to MW, both meanings are found in the Rg Veda (685). It seems that while Harirāyājī has used *pramādyati* to connote “neglecting divine duties,” Gopeśvarjī has switched around the activities associated with *pramāda*, as well as the grammatical form of the word, purposely using *pramādyati* in a cleverly different way to connote “indulging in mundane duties.”

⁵ The philosophical meaning of the term *viśaya* (object of perception) for Vallabhācārya, and its distinction from *viśayatā* (illusory perception) has been discussed in all its richly complex detail by K. Narain: “This objectivity belonging to the external objects of the world, including the human body—the objective objectivity—is termed ‘*viśaya*’ in the literature of the Vāllabha School. The other form of objectivity—the subjective objectivity or *viśayatā*—is the mother of all illusions and false-knowledge” (*The Philosophy of the Vallabha School of Vedanta*, 125-6). However, despite this philosophical distinction, in the vernacular Brajbhāṣā sense in which the term *viśaya* is being used here by Gopeśvarjī, *viśaya* does in fact refer not just to real physical phenomenon but rather, with a negative connotation, to the indulgence in them [*viz.*, *viśaya* = *bhog vilās*; *strī sambhog* (delight in enjoyment, enjoyment of a woman); *viśayak* = *sāmsārik*], SBK3, 237.

in the divine dharma of the soul, divine service, remembrance, singing praises (*kīrtan*), [devotional] conversation (*vārtā*),⁶ and discussions (*kathā*),⁷ etc.

⁶ *Vārtā* could be simply conversation, but what comes to mind in this context is the Vallabha Sampradāya hagiographic literature, in which the life stories of bhaktas are called *vārtās*.

⁷ Although the term *kathā* has in modern times come to signify the public and often commercial readings of the Śrī *Bhāgavata*, its sense for Śrī Harirāyājī is likely inclusive of noncommercial *Bhāgavata* readings as well as any other form of sacred reading and discussion—closer, in other words, to the Sanskrit meanings MW finds attested in *Mahābhārata* (“conversation, speech, talking together”) and *Mahābhārata*, *Ramāyaṇa* and *Hitopadeśa* (“story, tale, fable”) (MW 247). Within the Vallabha Sampradāya the frequently cited criticism of commercial *Bhāgavata* reading derives from the *vārtā* of Padmanābhdās in 84V, in which Padmanābhdās, a successful orator, hears Vallabhācārya teach from his *Nibandha* commentary that reading the *Bhāgavata* for money is equal to cutting one’s own throat; Padmanābhdās takes an oath not to recite the *Bhāgavata* for money and instead to earn only from reciting “*Mahābhārat*, etc.” [Gokulnāthajī and Harirāyājī. *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, 40].

In a study of modern *Bhāgavata kathā*, Wilczewska registered the common “complaint that *kathā* has become a business where performers ‘sell’ their exposition for high fees. Contemporary *kathā* listeners sometimes fault the expounders for their greed and idealize their predecessors for their simplicity and disinterest in material gain; performers in the old days apparently would never bargain about or demand a donation” (“Live with the Text,” 215). The above commercial criticisms voiced by Vallabhācārya may have to do with the findings of Wilczewska, that “In my experience, *Bhāgavata* expounders who are paid for a whole seven-day exposition would rather avoid the subject, while the Rāmcharitmānas reciters, who are paid hourly, were happy to openly give numbers, seeing the ability to earn income from *kathā* as a mark of professionalism and recognition of their knowledge” (215). In a recent article describing the centrality of *Bhāgavata* in the Vallabha Sampradāya, Redington mentions the common form of *kathā* as “*saptāha*, the seven-day complete recital of the *Bhāgavata*, as Vallabha himself used to do” (“Vallabha, the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa* and the Path of Grace,” 88). However, the standard argument against this assertion is that Vallabhācārya was known to have stayed sometimes for only 1 to 3 days at many of the 84 *baithaks*, the sites ostensibly commemorating places where he taught the *Bhāgavata*. Hence some would correct Redington by saying that it was not *Bhāgavat-saptāha*, but *Bhāgavat-parāyaṇa* (engaging in *Bhāgavata* study) which Vallabhācārya practiced at these sites.

Verse 2

*kevalaudarikatvaṁ tu tadīyānām na cocitam /
na pūrayet kimudaraṁ sevakānām kṛpānidhiḥ //2//*

Merely doing things to fill one's stomach (*udarikatvaṁ*) is not appropriate for [Kṛṣṇa's intimate devotees,] those who belong to Him (*tadīya*).
How could the Treasure of compassion ever not fill the stomachs of [i.e. provide everything for] his devotees?

Commentary

One who is engrossed in worldly activities as described above remains engaged only in activities for filling the stomach. This is not appropriate for Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas. Why? Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a treasure of compassion. He is the one who provides support and nourishment to the entire world, so what, will he not protect his own devotees [lit., servants]? He definitely has always continued to grace them. In this way, Vaiṣṇavas should maintain faith in Śrī Ṭhākurjī [Kṛṣṇa] in their minds (*mana*) and should always behave according to Bhagavat [divine] dharma. If they can't get by without work, then during *anavasara* [the times between *sevā*], they should work for four and a half hours,⁸ understanding in their mind that "Everything that is to be earned can be obtained in [that amount of time]." Vaiṣṇavas should keep that thought in mind. They should consider Bhagavān's greatness: "The Lord is all powerful and will perfect everything."

⁸ The length of time specified is one *prahar* (3 hrs.) plus four *ghaḍī* (96 minutes). One *ghaḍī* is equal to 24 minutes according to SBK2 (117) and RHS (231). DOB (558), perhaps due to its emphasis on poetry alone, only suggests "a moment."

Verse 3-4.5⁹

*cintā kāpi na kāryeti prabhuvākyam vicintyatām/
ajñānino jñāninaśca yadi syāt samatā kṛtau //3//
tadā tu sādhanābhāvāt kiṁ vṛttam jñānanaḥ¹⁰ phalam/*

Contemplate¹¹ Prabhu’s [Vallabhācārya’s] teaching “Never have anxiety.” If there is an equality between both those with and without knowledge who are accomplished [dedicated],¹² then without any practice/means,¹³ what fruit can occur from knowledge?

Commentary

One should not feel anxiety in the mind; as Śrī Ācārya Mahāprabhu says in *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*), [Skt.]¹⁴ “For those who have dedicated their soul, there is never a need to have any anxiety; Bhagavān is established in grace and will not give them a worldly way.”¹⁵ One should contemplate this and other teachings in the mind day and night. One might not realize

⁹ The editors segment 1.5 verses together here. In the *śabdārtha*, they add the following additional information: Śrī Gusāñjī has composed a *Vivaraṇa* commentary on this teaching about never having anxiety, originally found in his father’s teaching entitled *Navaratna*, the “Nine Jewels.” In his commentary, Gusāñjī notes that the Lord’s intimate ones don’t even have worldly anxiety, but nor should they be anxious about divine matters [lit., for the sake of the Lord]. An editor’s footnote elaborates that the matter of having knowledge or not refers to the teaching, also from *Navaratna* grantha, that regardless of whether one has dedicated oneself (taken initiation) with or without knowledge, one should not worry. The editor further notes that the “fruit of knowledge” will be explained in the next one and a half verses.

¹⁰ VMM gives *jñānataḥ*, SS 1915 gives *jñānanaḥ*. Both gloss it with the Brajbhāṣā *jñānaten*, “from knowledge,” which seems closer to the former (and therefore easier) reading—an ablative *taḥ* affixed to the noun. I cannot find attestation of the form *jñānanaḥ*. An even easier reading might be *jñāninaḥ* (found also in the following verse), the gen. sing. “of one with knowledge,” rendering here, “But what then would be the reward of one who has knowledge, being without means?” The answer to the question posed in this verse is provided in the second half of verse 4, which the editors, perhaps following Gopeśvarjī’s commentary, have grouped together with verse 5.

¹¹ A third person (polite) passive imperative.

¹² I take the dual past participle *kṛtau* to refer to these two types of individuals having “done it” which seems from context of the subsequent commentary to mean having dedicated themselves, i.e. having been initiated with dedication of their soul to Kṛṣṇa (*ātmanivedana*). The word *kṛtau* also brings to mind the related term *kṛtārtha*, describing practitioners who are “accomplished,” which could only be those with such initiation, through dedication.

¹³ I have interpreted *sadhanābhāvāt* in a more stative than causal sense, that is, “in the state of being without means” rather than “due to being without means.”

¹⁴ *cintā kāpi na kāryā niveditātmabhiḥ kadāpi /
bhagavānapi puṣṭiṣṭho na kariṣyati lokikīm ca gatim // Navaratna 1*

¹⁵ The editor qualifies in a parenthetical gloss of this *Navaratna* verse that the dedication of soul includes everything related to the soul (*ātmasambandhī*) as well, and that such dedicated ones should be understood to be Vaiṣṇavas.

this, that “I don’t understand anything; how will the Lord grant his grace (*kṛpā*)?” It should be considered that for the Lord, both knowledgeable bhaktas and those without knowledge are equal. Thus Śrī Ācāryajī says, [Skt.]¹⁶ “Soul dedication made either with or without knowledge {—what anxiety could there possibly be for them who have done so?}.” Whether this dedication through Śrī Ācāryajī was done with understanding or without understanding, by copying someone else, still there is no need for anxiety. Why? Because such is the nature of fire—if you place your hand in it knowingly or unknowingly, either way your hand will be burnt [lit., become ashes]. Such is the power of worldly fire; so those who have dedicated themselves through Śrī Ācāryajī¹⁷ would never have a worldly final destination (*gati*). It is said in the sixth skandha of the *Śrī Bhāgavata [Purāṇa]* [Skt.],¹⁸ “That name of supreme fame (*śloka*), [if] praised either out of ignorance or understanding, would burn that of men which is to be consumed (*adya*), like fire would burn fuel.”¹⁹

If one takes the name of Bhagavān with or without understanding, all sins will be incinerated. Contemplating (*bhāvanā*) in the mind these and other teachings (*vacan*), do not have²⁰ even the slightest bit of anxiety. Having placed refuge in the Lord alone in one’s mind, there [still] may arise an anxiety, by [the natural tendency of] the human intellect (*jīvabuddhi*): “I have no means (*sādhana*) at all; how then can knowledge bear any fruit?” Even this anxiety is not necessary. If no methods (*sādhana*) can be implemented, still the fruit of dedication is

¹⁶ *ajñānādathavā jñānāt kṛtamātmanivedanam / Navaratna 4a*

¹⁷ Vallabhācārya is considered by his followers to be an incarnation of divine fire, and his lineage the “Agnikul.” Hence the reference contrasting him with *laukik* (worldly) fire.

¹⁸ *ajñānādathavā jñānāduttamaślokanāma yat / sankīrtittatamadyam̐punsām̐ dahededho yathā’nalāḥ //*

¹⁹ The SS 1915 editors add that the supreme name is that of Bhagavān, the fuel (*adya*) [of men] is sin (*pāp*), while the fuel (*edhas*) of fire is wood (*kāṣṭh*).

²⁰ *karnī*—inflected infinitive showing obligation

perfected, through the acceptance of Śrī Ācāryajī. The following verse describes the contemplation on separation which arises in those bhaktas who have knowledge.

Verse 4.5-5

*virahaṇa harisphūrtyā sarvatra kleśabhāvanāt //4//
līlātiriktasṛṣṭau hi nirānandatvaniścayāt /
yathākathamcidvismṛtya prapañcam hṛdaye nyaset //5//*

With feelings of separation, by means of Hari’s power, from contemplating affliction everywhere—
due to one’s certainty of the lack of bliss in the creation other than the divine/līlā creation—
having somehow or another²¹ forgotten worldliness, one²² should place²³ [Kṛṣṇa (as described in the following verses)] in the heart.

Commentary

When Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu gives a soul the gift of separation (*viprayoga*), then separation/longing (*viraha*) arises in the heart and a feeling (*bhāvanā*) of affliction occurs; separation from Hari, the remover of all sorrows, is felt in all places. Without connection to Śrī Ṭhākurjī, nothing else will suffice (*suhāya*).²⁴ That separation is felt in every moment. The experience of the fruit of the Puṣṭi Mārga is felt by them in whose heart the fire of separation has thus²⁵ arisen.

The created beings of the “worldly flow” type (*pravāhīsrṣṭi*), lacking *līlā*-connection, are devoid of bliss (*nirānanda*). The Lord never gives them the gift of his own bliss. They ramble forever in saṁsāra as wanderers²⁶ (*carṣaṇī*) {SS 1915 footnote: Some Puṣṭi Mārgīyas, Maryādā

²¹ *yathākathamcit* = in any way whatsoever (MW, 247); *jaise taise* = somehow or other, OHED 381.

²² The “one” referred to here, according to Gopeśvarjī and/or the editors of the VMM and SS 1915 editions in the final line of the previous commentary and in their *śabdārtha* (gloss) on the present verse, is “one who has knowledge.”

²³ *nyaset* = (prescriptive use of optative) should/ought to place or receive with reverence, MW, 572.

²⁴ *suhāna* = to be or seem attractive, pleasant, agreeable, OHED, 1033.

²⁵ *yā śānti* in VMM seems an obvious typographical error for *yā bhānti*.

²⁶ The category of beings Vallabhācārya terms *carṣaṇī* are described in his text *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, verse 22: “There is another category of jīvas established on the *pravāha* path who may be seen congregating with individuals on any of the three primary paths). They are known by the word *carṣaṇī*, ‘wanderers.’ They all move

Mārgīyas, and those who have not been accepted/initiated may perform dhārmik activities, but because their inclinations are not firm, they wander around—they are known as *carṣaṇī*}. This saṁsāra is their only reward. Know for certain that, devoid of bliss, they do not have the joy of connection to Bhagavān’s līlā.

The divinely created ones (*daivī sṛṣṭi*) who do have that connection—having come to Śrī Mahāprabhuji’s shelter and experienced true association (*satsanga*)—for whom the mundane world may not be relinquished all at once, leave it little by little, in increments. Having thought [about this] in their mind night and day, they remember the Lord. The knowledge exists in their heart that, “I am the servant (*dāsa*) of the Lord. Out of ignorance, I have forgotten the Lord. My only dharma is to serve and remember him.” Divine souls have this knowledge, whereas demonic souls do not.

Verse 6

*kṛṣṇam gūḍham sadānandaṁ tathā līlāyutaṁ sadā /
rasaṁ svāsamanāmānaṁ bhaktabhāvātmakaṁ punaḥ //6//*

(One should place in the heart) Kṛṣṇa,²⁷ who is secret, always blissful, forever engaged in līlā, is [the very form of] nectar,²⁸ whose name is unequalled [lit., equal (only) to itself],²⁹ and moreover, embraces the divine moods of his devotees.³⁰

about on all the different paths (*vartmasu*). They remain in all these places for hardly a moment and never develop any true satisfaction. By following such activities, their fruit is everywhere piecemeal,” Smith, “Predestination and Hierarchy,” 212-13. Smith further remarks, “It is remarkable that Vallabhācārya speaks of them so succinctly, illustrating the openness and fluidity of devotional movements in the early sixteenth century” (212) and he also discusses an instance of the word in the Bh.P. itself (213).

²⁷ The SS 1915 editor clarifies, “The Kṛṣṇa whom the previous verse said to establish (*sthāpan*) in the heart, what is he like? This is explained as follows.”

²⁸ The editors, taking their cue from Gopeśvarjī’s subsequent commentary, gloss *rasaṁ* as *rasarūpa*, the form of bliss. The basic sense seems to be that Kṛṣṇa is or comprises nectar.

²⁹ The editors add that the name Kṛṣṇa is *saccidānandātmak* (comprised of truth, consciousness, and bliss) and that thus he is *Brahmarūpa* (the embodiment of the absolute Brahman).

³⁰ I use “embrace” in its sense of “include,” to give the term *-ātmaka* (consisting of, having the nature of) here in compound with *bhaktabhāva-*, more of the intimate connotation it warrants. That Kṛṣṇa embraces the bhāva of his bhaktas may also connote that he appears and reciprocates devotion according to the moods of his devotees.

Commentary

What is Kṛṣṇa like? He is supreme and extremely secret. The Vedas and others, unable to fathom his extent, say, “*neti neti*—he is not this, not that.” He is ungraspable by wise beings and is forever the form of bliss, his form a singular nectar. The cumulative joy of the whole world is but a speck of his bliss. And so in his treatise *Śrīkṛṣṇāśrāya (Refuge in Kṛṣṇa)* Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhuji has said, [Skt.]³¹ “All the gods are material. {Their bliss is quantifiable: the bliss of a Gandharva is hundredfold the bliss of a human, and so forth}. The bliss of formless Brahman is quantifiable. Hari is complete bliss, and therefore Kṛṣṇa is my refuge.” Other divinities are material, and their bliss too is material. Even the bliss of formless Brahman (*akṣāra*) falls within the calculation of all joys; it is not infinite. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete bliss. His bliss has no limit. He is forever the form of bliss and always absorbed in the nectar filled *līlās* for the benefit of the *Brajbhaktas*. He increases the nectars in *līlās* like *māna* (annoyance),³² etc., together with his devotees.

Himself the form of nectar, Kṛṣṇa dispels the annoyance in his devotees, becomes humble and appeases them, as described in the *Gīta Govinda*: “Place your exalted lotus feet upon my head as an adornment to dispel the love god’s poison!”³³ He petitions [Śrī Svāminījī] in this way, that “place your lotus feet upon my head. Your tender feet are the adornment of my head” and thus becomes humble in various ways. He embraces the divine moods of the *Brajbhaktas*. By feeling divine moods (*bhāvakariken*), the *Brajbhaktas* experience Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s nectar.

³¹ *prākṛtāḥ sakalā deva gaṇitānandakam brhat / pūrṇānando haristasmāt kṛṣṇa eva gatirmama // Kṛṣṇāśrāya (Refuge in Kṛṣṇa) 8*

³² *māna* can have the meaning of pride (*abhimān; ahaṁkāra*) but in this context it most likely is being used in its meaning of annoyance or anger (*rūṭhane kī kriyā; krodh*) to refer to the annoyance in love the *Gopīs* sometimes develop towards Kṛṣṇa. SBK 3, 147.

³³ From Jayadeva’s *Gīta Govinda*, aṣṭapadi 19, in the 10th sarga. Here Kṛṣṇa is asking Śrī Rādhā to place her feet on his head, and hence the connection with Kṛṣṇa’s own humble efforts to dispel his devotees’ annoyance.

Verse 7

*yaśodotsanga-lālitam mugdha-bhāva-samāvṛtam*³⁴ /
prapañca-vairiṇam bādhahetu-laukika-nāśanam //7//

(One should place in one’s heart Kṛṣṇa,) who is caressed (*lālita*)³⁵ in the lap of Śrī Yaśodājī, concealed in the mood of innocence,³⁶ the enemy of the mundane, the destroyer of the worldliness that is the cause of obstructions {to *sevā*}.

Commentary

What is Kṛṣṇa like? Śrī Yaśodājī takes him into her lap and feeds him, creating supreme splendor. Like an innocent babe, he is wrapped around her neck. He is the enemy of the mundane: these bodily relations of wife, son, husband, house, and worldly and Vedic undertakings. When Śrī Yaśodājī went to take care of some milk that had boiled over, she placed him on the ground for just a moment. Śrī Ṭhākurjī (knowing, “I really love milk”) could not bear this. He went and broke a dairy pot and fed some monkeys the butter that was in it. By saying/doing this he demonstrated that “When people leave me to do household duties, none of their household, worldly or Vedic duties will come to fruition.” Worldly affairs are destroyed for all of those bhaktas who take refuge in Kṛṣṇa. Why? Because attraction to worldly affairs is an obstruction. That is why Kṛṣṇa is the destroyer of worldly desire, anger, pride, jealousy, egotism, selfishness, and all other illusory worldliness. He removes all of those worldly things for his bhaktas and attracts them [instead] to himself.

³⁴ JMS gives *mukta*, but it was later corrected in another hand by a *gdha* conjunct written above the *ka*.

³⁵ SS 1915 glosses *lālita* as *śobhita*, suggesting that Kṛṣṇa is either embellished by or (more likely) embellishes Yaśodājī’s lap. MW (898) however, for *lālita*, suggests only caressed, fondled, cherished, etc. In modern usage RHS (721) similarly offers “*dulāra huā*.”

³⁶ The SS 1915 editors for some reason gloss *samāvṛta* with *atisundara* (extremely beautiful), but I think MW’s “covered all over, concealed” accords well with the concept that Kṛṣṇa’s childhood plays conceal his simultaneous amorous plays. This is Kṛṣṇa’s capability to support seemingly contradictory dharmas, a characteristic which the sampradāyik commentators designate as *viruddhadharmāśraya*. For example, in *Śikṣāpatra* 4.6: “All of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *līlās* are eternal. As a child, he enacts plays of an adolescent, and as an adolescent he enacts those of a child. Know this Kṛṣṇa as the support of contradictory dharmas—*Śrī Ṭhākurjī kī sagarī līlā nitya hai, bāl avasthā men kiśorlīlā karata hain, kiśor avasthā men bālalīlā karata hain, yah viruddhadhamāśrayī prabhu kon jānanen*.”

Verse 8

*svapraveśāya kāmādi-sarvadoṣa-nivāraṇam /
svārtha-tyaktākṣhila-svīya-paramārti-mahotsavam //8//*

(One should place in one’s heart Kṛṣṇa,) who wards off lust and all other impurities for the purpose of his own entrance (*svapraveśa*),³⁷ and who for his own ones (*svīya*) who have renounced³⁸ everything³⁹ for the sake of him, is the great festival of supreme burning desire (*ārti*).

Commentary

When this Kṛṣṇa decides to enter (*praveś*) into the hearts of his devotees, at that moment he removes the impurities of lust, anger, pride, jealousy, etc. of the bhakta’s heart. By saying this it is explained that as long as the bhakta’s heart is filled with lust and other impurities, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not enter (*padhāren*) the heart. Once the impurities are removed, then know that the Lord will without a doubt enter the heart. Having entered into the heart of the bhakta (who, having left worldly and Vedic duties, feels separation and the burning desire to see the Lord), he gives *ārti*—supreme affliction (*duḥkh*). So he is known as the form of a great celebration, which was perfected for the Brajbhaktas, in whose hearts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, saturated with divine mood (*bhāvātmak*) resides. That is why they were not able to maintain their household responsibilities; they spent the entire day singing the *Veṇu Gīta*, *Yugala Gīta*, etc. In the five chapters on the Rāsa Līlā, the Lord disappeared and the Brajbhaktas experienced intense separation. Then he again appeared and gave the nectar-gift. So without that experience of separation, how could the Lord have appeared? Therefore, as much separation and suffering are felt for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so much greater is the form of the supreme festival.

³⁷ SS 1915 *śabdārtha*: “When lust and other impurities flee from the heart, then Kṛṣṇa appears—for that reason.”

³⁸ VMM has erroneous *vyakt kiye hain* against SS 1915 *tyakt he*. The SS 1915 editor notes a variant reading (*pāṭhbheda*) in some books of *svārtham-tyaktvā* for *svārtha-tyakta*. JMS gives the latter. The meaning of the former variant according to the editor is that “by forgoing his own purposes of love-play (*ramaṇ*) and becoming hidden (*antarhita*), he gave all the bhaktas the gift of burning/longing, and thus he is the supreme festival.”

³⁹ SS 1915 *śabdārtha*: everything “worldly and Vedic.”

Verse 9

*Śrīmadācārya-hṛdaya-śeṣa-paryanka-śāyīnam /
ananta-bhāva-rūpātma-gopī-ramaṇa-tatparam //9//*

(One should place in one's heart Kṛṣṇa,) who rests on the Śeṣa-serpent-like bed of Śrīmad Ācāryajī's heart, and the nature of whose form is unlimited divine mood (*bhāva*), who is engaged in love-play (*ramaṇa*) with the Gopīs.

Commentary

This bhāva-filled (*bhāvātmak*) Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays (*līlā*) within Śrī Ācāryajī's heart together with the bhaktas. Just as the serpent Śeṣa on which Nārāyaṇa sleeps is there in the milk ocean, here Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who comprises divine existence (*bhāva*) and nectar (*rasa*), sleeps on the bed formed by Śrī Ācāryajī's heart. Over there he is with only one Lakṣmī, but here he is engaged in love-play together with multiple thousands upon thousands of bhāva-filled Brajbhaktas. Thus Śrī Ācāryajī explained his heart's mood (*bhāva*) in his *Śrī Subodhinījī* [commentary] on the [Bh.P.] tenth skandha, which states "I bow to Śrī Kṛṣṇa who reclines in the milk-ocean of līlā in the heart [as] upon the serpent Śeṣa, who is a treasure of skills and served by the loving plays of thousands of Lakṣmīs." In this way the Lord makes līlās in the heart of our own Śrī Ācāryajī, who revealed the *Śrī Subodhinījī* by first bowing to him [Kṛṣṇa] (in this *mangalācarana* verse). In this way, Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu has manifested his own heart's līlā and reveals it to his close devotees (*nija-bhaktan*). The bhakta who would remember Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu along with his līlās in this way will gain personal experience (*anubhava*).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ MW (36) aptly suggests for *anubhava*, "perception" and "experience, knowledge derived from personal observation."

Verse 10

*madhupālijavodyukta-romālisuvirājitam*⁴¹ /
*prasanna-vadanāmbhojaṃ*⁴² *karuṇā-rasavaddṛśam* //10//

(One should place in one's heart Kṛṣṇa,) who is beautifully embellished by lines of hair as if made by rows of swift black bees, whose pleased/pleasing face is a lotus, and whose glance is like compassionate nectar.

Commentary

What is Kṛṣṇa like? The lines of hair near his lotus navel, like rows of black bees, create splendor. His lotus face is extremely pleased (*prasanna*). With the Brajbhaktas he makes various līlās and experienced bliss; from doing that his lotus face is extremely cheerful (*praphullita*) and full of the nectar of compassion. He is filled with that compassionate nectar for his bhaktas and by glancing at them with compassion, causes them to imbibe nectar.

⁴¹ The SS 1915 and VMM editions' *suvirājitam* seems an easier and at first glance, seemingly more accurate reading than the JMS, which gives *romāliṣu virājitam*, with the prior word in locative plural "upon the lines of hair" rather than in compound. However, I notice that Gopeśvarjī's commentary, by merely saying "*śobhā deta hain*," does not seem to gloss any *su* in *suvirājitam*, as the editors do with *viśeṣa śobhita* (SS 1915 and VMM) and *suśobhita* (SS 1936). Moreover, Gopeśvarjī's commentary does incorporate a locative sense by locating those lines of hair "*nābhikamala pās*" (nearby his lotus navel). However, in the end I fail to make sense of *virājitam* separated out from what seems by necessity to be a larger compound.

⁴² The SS 1915 edition's *ambhoja* compared to *ambhojaṃ* (neut. acc. sing.) in the JMS and VMM seems to be an accidental omission of anusvāra, because the *śabdārtha* treats *ambhoja(ṃ)* as the final member of a separate compound; I see no reason it should stand without the (commonly omitted) anusvāra.

Verses 11-12

*barhipiccha-śiro-bhūṣaṃ śṛṅgāra-rasa-rūpiṇam /
evaṁvidhānantagaṇaṃ vidhāya hṛdaye sadā //11//
tasya sevāṃ prakurvīta yāvajjīvaṃ svadharmataḥ /
na phalārthaṃ na lobhārthaṃ⁴³ na pratiṣṭhā-prasiddhaye //12//*

[When] he whose head adornment is a peacock feather,
who embodies amorous essence/nectar (*śṛṅgārarasa*),
who has every kind (*vidhā*) of unlimited virtue,
has been continually established in the heart,
one should perform⁴⁴ his service to the extent of life, as one's own dharma,
not for the sake of reward or greed, nor towards the attainment of fame.⁴⁵

Commentary

That *barhi*, the crown arranged from peacock feathers and placed on [Kṛṣṇa's] head, is the very form of amorous nectar. When peacocks [are ready to] give pleasure (*rasadān*), they dance. Similarly, Śrī Ṭhākurjī wears the peacock crown ornamentation and delights the bhaktas, and that is why the peacock crown ornamentation is the form of the amorous *rasa*. In this way, having meditated in one's own heart upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa—who plays⁴⁶ various līlās on land and in the water, such as the *Rāsa Līlā* etc.—remembering him and seeing him always and every day, as a habit, definitely place him in the heart.

One should always meditate in the heart upon that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the form of amorous *rasa* as described above, through mental service (*mānasī sevā*). When one first applies one's mind to service using body and wealth, then mental service can be attained. And so Śrī Ācāryajī

⁴³ The JMS variant *lobhārthaṃ* rather than SS 1915 and VMM *bhogārthaṃ* seems corroborated by Gopeśvarjī's commentary, in which there is no mention of *bhoga* but a clear and appropriately placed reference to *lobha*, as follows: "main sevā karūṅgo to mokon vaiṣṇava jāniken kou kachu de jāy yah **lobh** man men na rākhe aur pratiṣṭha ke arth hū sevā na kare."

⁴⁴ *prakurvīta* = 3rd sing. opt. (*pra* + root *kr*).

⁴⁵ *pratiṣṭha-siddhaye* – dat. sing. (*siddhi*).

⁴⁶ *sanyukt*, lit., "is joined with."

Mahāprabhu has said in his treatise *Siddhānta-Muktāvali* (*Pearl Necklace Teachings*) [Skt.],⁴⁷ “Kṛṣṇa’s *sevā* should always be performed; the highest is considered to be mental *sevā*.”

Mānasī sevā is attained by one who continually does Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *sevā*. This is a Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇava’s dharma, to accomplish (*siddh*) Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *sevā* always. Just like if a Brahmin doesn’t repeat the Gāyatri mantra, his Brahminhood would leave him, the Vaiṣṇavness of one who is a Vaiṣṇava but doesn’t perform the Lord’s *sevā* vanishes. Therefore, one should do *sevā*, knowing it to be one’s own dharma (*svadharmā*).

One should not do *sevā* while keeping any worldly or religious (Vedic) hopes, [desires] for liberation, etc. “If I do *sevā* then people will recognize me as a Vaiṣṇava and someone might give me something”—one shouldn’t keep this greed (*lobh*) in mind, nor do *sevā* for the sake of fame. “If I do *sevā* then I will gain importance (*baḍāī*) and people will come to know me as a great Vaiṣṇava”—one shouldn’t do *sevā* in that way, for the purpose of creating one’s own fame. And so in the ninth skandha of the *Śrī Bhāgavata* [Bh.P. 9.4.67] Bhagavān says to Durvāsā, “Fulfilled by *sevā*, they do not desire the four acknowledged (*pratītam*)⁴⁸ types of liberation, such as *sālokya* (reaching my realm), etc. [attained] by serving me; how then [could they desire] anything else immersed in time?”⁴⁹ In this and other utterances, Bhagavān says that, “My bhaktas are fulfilled by my *sevā*. Having served me, even if I give the four acknowledged

⁴⁷ *kṛṣṇasevā sadā kāryā mānasī sā parā matā / Siddhānta-Muktāvali 1*

⁴⁸ The SS 1915 editor seems to gloss *pratītam* as “attained” (*prāpt bhaye*), which does help connect the instrumental *matsevayā* with the rest of the passage, for it allows one to translate ‘they do not desire the four liberations attained by my *sevā*.’ The translators at vedabase.com offer a similar “*pratītam* = automatically attained.” However, the meanings given by MW (673) and OHED (659) cluster around “acknowledged, recognized,” which fittingly describes the four liberations. Similarly, Gopeśvarjī’s gloss seems closer to this root meaning in his “*tākari pratīt cāron prakār kī mukti main det hon so nanhī let hain,*” because there is no instrumental to suggest “attained by X.”

⁴⁹ SS 1915 editors offer “rulership, etc.” (*rājyādik*) as examples of rewards that are subject to time and thus presumably even less desirable to the devout worshipper than the longer lasting four types of liberation.

(*pratīta*) types of liberation,⁵⁰ they don't accept them. That is how totally desireless they are.

What then, to them, are positions bound by time?" To do *sevā* with mental fulfillment

(*manapūrvak*) in that way is the natural dharma of a Vaiṣṇava.

Verse 13

*Śrīmadācārya-mārgeṇa nānyenāpi kadācana /
na kalpita-prakāreṇa na durbhāva-samanvayāt //13//*

[One should perform his service]⁵¹ according to Śrīmad Ācāryajī's path⁵² and never any other, not by imagined methods,⁵³ nor in a way that will result in⁵⁴ bad mood.⁵⁵

Commentary

If a Vaiṣṇava is to make *sevā*, it should be according to the ways (*rīti*) of Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhujī's Puṣṭi Mārga, never—even by accident—by the ways of other paths, nor in ways only imagined in one's own mind. If one doesn't understand, one should ask a great bhakta (*bhagavadīya*) of the Puṣṭi Mārga. One should never, by any means, do *sevā* [in ways] imagined in the mind, nor with incorrect mood (*durbhāva*), [as in thinking] that *sevā* is the same as worldly activities. One should not do *sevā* with such lack of faith (*aśraddhā*).⁵⁶ One should do *sevā* full of love, knowing it to be the highest, supreme reward.

⁵⁰ SS 1915 editor clarifies: *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, *sāyujya*, *sārūpya*, roughly, the liberations of attaining Kṛṣṇa's realm, his proximity, mergeance, and his form.

⁵¹ Continued from verse 12, "*sevām prakurvīta*."

⁵² SS 1915 editor qualifies, "by the ways (*rīti*) Śrīmad Ācāryajī has explained to make *sevā* in (his text) *Sarvanirṇaya*."

⁵³ SS 1915 editor gives the example "by offering [heavy] ornamentation (*ābharana*) in the hot season, etc."

⁵⁴ *samanvayāt* = "in consequence of," MW, 1155.

⁵⁵ *durbhāva* = "bad disposition: ill-will; ill-temper; bad behavior or manners," OHED, 504. SS 1915 editor interjects, "for example, if the best jewelry, cloth etc. are not obtained with a little bit of wealth, from that a bad mood will come—*jaisen thorī samṛddhi men ābharan vāstrādi na milen tāson durbhāv āve*." It's unclear whether the bad mood will arise because one has too little wealth to purchase the best items, or because one has not been willing to spend enough of his or her existing wealth to acquire the best items. The former situation would be somewhat out of the individual's control, so the latter is more plausible, but in any case, Gopeśvarjī's example in his subsequent commentary is more clear.

⁵⁶ VMM *aśrayaddhā* seems an obvious typographical error.

Verses 14-15

*tattvaṃ viditvā paramaṃ yaśodotsanga-lālitam /
śrīmadācārya-tatputrau*⁵⁷ *hitvāsmat-svāminīrapi //14//
tattulya-buddhyā*⁵⁸ *nāśaḥ syāt-sarvatheti viniścayaḥ /
etāvati satī śikṣā samkṣiptā hr̥di dhīyatām*⁵⁹ //15//⁶⁰

Understanding (*viditvā*) as the supreme essence [anyone] except (*hitvā*) Kṛṣṇa, who is caressed (*lālita*) in the lap of Śrī Yaśodājī, Śrīmad Ācārya, his two sons, and our *svāminīs* [the *gopīs*]⁶¹ with the understanding of their equality would be total destruction—this is certain.⁶² Fix in the heart this much concise, true teaching.

Commentary

Vaiṣṇavas should do Bhagavān’s *sevā* and know these four⁶³ to be the supreme essence—the first essence is [Kṛṣṇa] who is caressed in the lap of Śrī Yaśodājī. As Śrī Gusāñjī has said: “Oh people of wisdom!⁶⁴ Know the supreme essence to be [Kṛṣṇa] who is caressed in the lap of

⁵⁷ JMS *tatputrau* (acc. dual) is factually more accurate than SS 1915 *tatputrān* (acc. pl.), because Vallabhācārya had two sons. It seems that the SS 1915 editors, as well as what they present as Gopeśvarjī’s commentary, take *putrān* as a respectful plural referring solely to Śrī Gusāñjī, removing Vallabhācārya’s second son, Śrī Gopināthjī (considered to be the form of Maryādā Puruṣottama) from the picture. The more tolerant *tatputrau*, if original, contrasts with Harirāyajī’s allegedly disparaging view towards Gopināthjī proposed by Saha: “When the scattered references to Gopināth from the *vārtā* literature are put together, one is left with the impression that Gopināth was highly involved in the fundraising efforts for the community, but his association with practitioners of the *maryādā mārga* rendered Gopināth, in the eyes of Harirāya, as a lowly person whose initiates were to be ignored,” Saha, “Community,” 233.

⁵⁸ SS 1915, JMS *buddhyā* are the more correct inst. sing. of the fem. noun *buddhi*, intelligence; VMM *buddhayā* would be inst. sing. of fem. adjectival form *buddhā*.

⁵⁹ JMS *hr̥di dhīyatām* compared to SS 1915 *dhriyatām hr̥di* are equivalent, both 3rd person (polite) imperatives, the former from root *dhā* [MW (513): to place; to fix the attention upon] and the latter from *dhṛ* [MW (519): to hold, fix upon].

⁶⁰ These two verses (14-15) suddenly feature a larger number of variations between JMS and SS 1915, including the three instances described above, as well as these apparent scribal errors: 1) JMS *sarvartheti* likely resulted from accidental repetition of the half consonant *-r*; it is not present in SS 1915 *sarvatheti*. 2) JMS *etāvātā* would be a masc. or neut. inst. sing., but here it modifies fem. *śikṣā*, so it is most likely a simple error resulting from omission of the *ī* diacritic, which when present yields the more correct nom. fem. sing. *etāvati* as in SS 1915 and VMM.

⁶¹ SS 1915 glosses *svāminīḥ* as *śrībrajabhaktan*.

⁶² *viniścayaḥ* is actually a masc. noun “settled opinion” (MW, 971) but I feel the meaning is still preserved in my adjectival rendering.

⁶³ I leave the Brajbhāṣā “*cāron padārth kon*” as “these four” because they aren’t exactly things, nor only four people, nor categories of being.

⁶⁴ SS 1915 has either neglected to directly gloss *ho budhāḥ* or done so merely with the verbal form *jānane*. SS 1936 glosses *budhāḥ* as the Hindi nom. pl. *jñānavān* (“*unko jñānavān āsur samajhte hain*”) but nothing for *ho*. I have glossed this phrase as *budhāḥ* voc. pl. and the ind. particle *ho* “used in calling to a person or in challenging,” MW, 1305.

Śrī Yaśodājī; those (*ye*) who say otherwise—know them (*tān*) to be demonic beings (*āsurān*).” Accordingly, know the first essence to be [Kṛṣṇa] who is caressed in the lap of Śrī Yaśodājī, Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu to be the second essence, Śrī Gusāñjī (Śrī Viṭṭhalnāthajī) the third, and our *svāminījī* (the Brajbhaktas) the fourth. One should understand these four essences in one’s mind.

Those who would consider anyone else in the world to be equal to the above four essences—Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Ācāryajī, Śrī Gusāñjī, and Śrī Svāminījī—will quickly be ruined. One should know them to be demonic. So it has been described in the *vārttā* [the Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇava hagiographies] that when Rāmdāsajī sang poems about Śrī Ācāryajī at Mirabai’s house, Mirabai said, “Sing some poems about Śrī Ṭhākurjī.” As soon as he heard that, Rāmdāsajī said “*dārī rānḍ!*”⁶⁵ What, [did you think] this is poem about your husband? After today I will not look at your face.” Then Mirabai started trying to keep him [there] by appeasing him a lot, but he did not stay; he left that town.

Chītasvāmī too had gone to Birbal’s house to collect his yearly payment⁶⁶ when he sang, “Chītasvāmī Giridharana Śrīviṭṭhala sings, ‘This one [Gusāñjī] is that one [Kṛṣṇa] and that one is this one, without a doubt.’”

Hearing this, Birbal said, “If the Emperor asks [about your claim] then what answer will you give?”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Insults, something like “slut,” (*ḍārī* f. “*striyon kī ek gālī*”; m. “*vah puruṣ, jiske kai patniyān hon,*” SBK2, 252) and “widow.”

⁶⁶ SS 1915 *varasonḍī* is spelled *barasonḍī* in the 252V version of Chītasvāmī’s life story (Gokulnāthajī and Harirāyājī, 252V 3, 335). RHS (580) lists a definition for *barasonḍī* as “annual tax—*varṣ ke varṣ diyā jānevālā kar*” suggesting its relation to “year” (*varṣ* or *baras*). SS 1936 has translated the term (whether *varasonḍī* or *barasonḍī*) into Hindi *vārṣik bandhān*, something like “annual salary” (based on the definition of *bandhān* as “a way of exchange; *lena dena kī paripāṭī*, RHS, 570), and also adds the detail, gleaned from the poet’s *vārtā*, that Birbal was Chītasvāmī’s religious client (*yajamān*).

⁶⁷ The unusual form *dyoge* in SS 1915 for “will give” may be an antiquated form or simply erroneously printed. It has been altered to the expected *doge* in VMM.

As soon as he heard that, Chītasvāmī said, “My brother, you too are a barbarian (*mlecch*). After today I will not look at your face.” Having spoken thus, he left his payment and set out. Vaiṣṇavas should maintain such an oath/shelter (*tek*).⁶⁸ Thus, if one considers anyone in the world to be equal to these four essences, it will definitely be their ruin. Now Śrī Harirāyajī says, “Think about this manner of teachings written in these letters and definitely place them in your heart.”

Verse 16

*anye'pi copadeṣṭavyā yadi syuradhikāriṇaḥ /
milanti svecchayā śraddhāyutāḥ pṛchanti cettadā // 16//*

Moreover, (*api ca*) others are to be instructed only if⁶⁹ they should happen (*syuḥ*) to have eligibility, meet [you] and inquire of their own volition, and are full of faith.

Commentary

Do not discuss the teachings described above in front of others. If someone has the eligibility worthy of [such] teachings, speak before them alone. If, by the Lord’s wish, they themselves should come to you and make a request, and ask, full of faith, and listen with attentive mind, speak with them. Don’t invite others by your own wish and speak with them. This is the supreme teaching, because without the vessel of eligibility, nectar (*rasa*) will not remain. Having understood this, do not speak [indiscriminately] in front of others.

⁶⁸ *tek* = *pratijñā*; *āśrāy*, *sahāra*, SBK2, 200.

⁶⁹ *yadi ced...tadā* = “if...then,” with perhaps a certain measure of emphasis (cf. MW, 401) on the verb, as in “only if they ask.”

Verse 17

*jīva-tatparatā-siddhau kṛpāluṣeṣu tuṣyati /
yathā viṣayiṇām toṣo dūtikāsu tathā hareḥ // 17 //*

The compassionate One (*kṛpāluḥ*) is pleased by those bhaktas' perfection of [intense] devotion (*paratā*) to him (*tat*). Just as desirous men gain satisfaction⁷⁰ from [their lovers'] messengers, so Hari [is pleased by those bhaktas.]⁷¹

Commentary

If an individual becomes absorbed in sacred stories, as described above, then the fruit of the Puṣṭi Mārga arises. Hiraṇyakaśipu gave Prahlād a lot of grief, but Prahlād did not leave his absorption in the divine dharma and his refuge in Bhagavān; then Śrī Nṛsiṃhajī appeared and removed his obstructions, and the reward was attained. In the very same way, if Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas are focused (*tatpar*) in the Puṣṭi path, the fruit will be attained. The Lord is compassionate, so he derives pleasure from such bhaktas. Just as a lover is pleased by [his beloved's] messengers, so Bhagavān, seeing the one-pointedness of his bhaktas, is very pleased by them. Pleased, he completes all of his followers' (*dāsa ke*) undertakings and always graces them. Having removed the obstacles, he bestows the fruit. This is the definitive teaching.

*Thus concludes the 18th Śikṣāpatra composed by Śrī Harirāyajī,
including the Brajbhāṣā commentary written by Śrī Gopeśvarjī.*

⁷⁰ The genitive constructions indicate possession. In the first two padas, the compassionate One is pleased “by the perfection (*siddhau*, loc.)...of them (*teṣu*, gen.)” and in the last two padas, “for the desirous men (*viṣayiṇām*, gen.) [there is] contentment with the messengers (*dūtikāsu*, loc.)”

⁷¹ The SS 1915 editor qualifies them as “*bhagavatvārttā karivevāre bhaktan*—the bhaktas who [read/discuss] sacred stories,” which he seems to have taken from Gopeśvarjī's commentary.

Translation of Śikṣāpatra Letter 23

Introduction:

Now in the 23rd Śikṣāpatra it is explained that one should not hold worldly suffering in the heart [*laukik duḥkh hr̥daya men na dharano*], nor have anxiety about divine subjects [*alaukik men cintā*]. One should avoid turning away from the Lord (*bahirmukhatā*). The methods by which to remove that condition (reading or listening to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata [Bh.P.], remembering one's dedication in the company of Vaiṣṇavas, always taking the name of God and reflecting upon refuge [*śaraṇabhāvaṇā*]) will be explained.

One should keep reciting the eight-syllable mantra and, reciting the five-syllable mantra, contemplate the state of belonging to God (*tadīyatva-bhāvaṇā*). Maintain renunciation and contentment. Above [in a prior letter] it was said that the divine mood (*bhāva*) is perfected in the heart (*hr̥daya*) by conversing¹ together with great devotees (*bhagavadīya*), and that then the Lord can be seen in the heart. Then the mind will not stray to worldly matters. But until the heart is free of anxiety, how can divine mood (*bhāva*) possibly arise? All of these methods will be explained here:

¹ In Sanskrit, *goṣṭhī* (f.) according to MW (367) derives from *go* + *stha*, a place where cows are stationed, and then in *Mahābhārata* “an assembly, meeting, society, association.” MW also lists a related form, *goṣṭha* (n.) as “conversation, discourse.” SBK2 (112) gives for *goṣṭhī* both meanings, *sabhā* and *vārtālāp*. The senses are so close as to perhaps not even warrant total distinction, for it is understood in this context that to meet with others is also to talk to them, but here the verbal sense seems to be implied. The introduction to letter 23 uses the term in reference to the previous letter, where we find in Śikṣāpatra 22.3 *goṣṭhī ca tādṛśaiḥ* [or, *tādṛśī*] which could be either the association or conversation with *tādṛśī* or great bhaktas. The editor of VMM glosses *goṣṭhī* there as *snehasahit vārttā* or loving conversation. In the commentary on Śikṣāpatra 22.4 Gopeśvarjī writes *bhagavadīya ke sangā nitya goṣṭhī karata*, which seems also to be most likely a use of *goṣṭhī* in its verbal sense as “conversation,” because the more basic physical meaning of “association” is already conveyed by the word *sangā*. That is also the case when that concept is paraphrased in the introduction to letter 23: *bhagavadīya sangā goṣṭhī*.

Verse 1

*bhavantaḥ śrutasiddhāntāḥ² katham muhyanti laukike /
alaukike tu cintā yā viṣayābhāvato na sā //1//*

How could one such as yourself,³
one by whom the teachings have been heard,
become bewildered in the world?
Nor is there anxiety in divine [matters], due to the absence of worldly objects of concern.⁴

Commentary

Now Śrī Harirāyajī writes, you know all the teachings of the *Śrutis*, *Smṛtis*, *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, and *Śrī Bhāgavata* [Bh.P.], so how is it that you fall into delusion in worldly affairs? This is not befitting of you. Now I am telling you the teachings, so apply your mind and listen: as long as worldly subjects/desires have not fled from the heart, divine mood (*bhāva*) will not settle in the heart, and as a result of that there will be anxiety every single moment. Once there is an absence of [worldly] subjects in the heart, then that anxiety will not exist. And so, in our Puṣṭi Mārga, there is no need for worldly or divine anxieties.

² In JMS, the visarga after *bhavanta(h)* has been added above the word, and there is none where expected in *śrutasiddhāntā(h)*.

³ *bhavantaḥ*, the respectful pronoun for “you.”

⁴ *viṣaya* = topic, subject, any object of concern, sensual enjoyments, sensuality, MW, 997.

I have suggested this meaning based on what follows in the commentary. I could not make total sense of the SS 1915 gloss “or alaukik men jo cintā he so to viṣaya ke abhāva son nanhī he” from which I could only gather: “And that anxiety which is over divine [matters], that, however is not from a lack of objects of concern/desires.” The basic meaning as I understand it is that divine anxiety too should be removed, through developing a lack of desires/concerns.

Verse 2

*ataḥ⁵ sarvasamartho 'smat-prabhuḥ sarvaṁ karoti hi /
pīteva⁶ nija-dāsānām-aihikaṁ pāralaukikam //2//*

Hence, our Lord, who is all-powerful, definitely accomplishes everything for his own followers (*dāsānām*), like a father, in this world and beyond.

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, our lord, is endowed with all powers. So Śrī Gusāñjī has said in his *Vijñapti*, [Skt.]⁷ “There is no doubt here; I have seen in You alone, Lord (*Īśvara*), this capability to do, not do, as well as do otherwise (*anyathā*).” Śrī Kṛṣṇa has the total capability to do, not do, and do otherwise.⁸ So Prabhu can perfect everything worldly and divine, and therefore his own ones (*bhagavadīyas*) have no need for anxiety. So the example is given, that like in the world one’s father protects his son, in the same way, the Lord will perfect all the worldly and divine [affairs] of his own followers. Know this for certain.

⁵ I have chosen Jatipura *ataḥ* (“and now”) over SS 1915 relative *yataḥ* (“from this”) because I see no correlative and no clear link to the previous verse.

⁶ SS 1915 adds a variant *pativat* (like a husband) to *pīteva* (like a father). I can imagine the appearance of both forms in manuscripts because of the orthographic similarity, particularly with the following nasal *na* of *nija* which is orthographically similar to a final *t* in *pativat* and with which it would combine in sandhi *t+n -> nn*.

⁷ *tṛtīya Vijñapti*, verse 3:

*karttuṁ punarathākarttumanyathākarttumīśvare /
sāmarthyam yanmayā dr̥ṣṭam tvayyevāto na saṁśayaḥ // 3//*

The anusvāra necessary for *dr̥ṣṭam* to agree with the neut. nom. *sāmarthyam* in the indirect construction, “*sāmarthyam yanmayā dr̥ṣṭam*—this has been seen by me,” is missing from SS 1915. A past participle *dr̥ṣṭa* in neut. voc. would not fit here. The *Nava Vijñapti Stotra* (by Viṭṭhalanāthajī) edition I was able to consult does contain the anusvāra for *dr̥ṣṭam*, but omits it from *sāmarthyam* and gives what I believe is a misspelling, *śaṁśayaḥ*.

⁸ SS 1915 has, as is common, left out the expected nasal anusvāra on these Brajbhāṣā infinitive forms, yielding instead only *karttu*, *akarttu*, *ananyathākarttu*.

Verse 3

*ata evāsmad-ācārya-vacanam⁹ vai virājate /
bhagavānapi puṣṭistho na¹⁰ kariṣyati lokikīṃ¹¹ {ca gatim} //3//*

Therefore the words of our Ācārya indeed illuminate:

“Bhagavān, who too (*api*) is rooted in grace, will not produce a worldly {way}.”

Commentary

Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas need not have anxiety, as our Śrī Ācāryajī’s nectar speech illuminates¹² in this latter half [verse] composed in the *āryā* meter.¹³ It is the latter half of the first verse of *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*) treatise. So according to this teaching (*vacan*), Bhagavān is directly present in this path of grace. So he will never create a worldly way (*gati*) for his own dedicated souls. Vaiṣṇavas should definitely hold this thought in mind. Therefore there is no other path equal to this Puṣṭi Mārga, in which after taking shelter, a worldly way will never arise. Here one might object, “By becoming a renunciate, a worldly way will not arise,” but if someone remains in the world and carries out all worldly duties, how could a worldly way not occur? [By way of reply], at this point it is said:

⁹ In JMS *ācārye* (loc. sing.) has been corrected to *ācārya*.

¹⁰ A mistake in the Hindi edition’s *ṭīkā* of this verse omits the negative particle *na* and inserts *sthito*, yielding the incorrect Sanskrit “*bhagavānapi puṣṭi sthito kariṣyati*,” even though it gives the correct “*bhagavānapi puṣṭistho na kariṣyati*” in the verse *mūlāṃ*. The negative sense is however maintained in the subsequent Hindi translation, which correctly states “*kabhi bhi na karenge*.”

¹¹ JMS ends this verse at *lokikīṃ*. SS 1915 finishes the quote, from *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*) 1b, with “*ca gatim*.” As described in the commentary, this verse was composed by Vallabhācārya in the *āryā* meter. This quote is the second half of a verse and thus contains 27 mātrā. JMS ends at *lokikīṃ* to preserve the meter, as was likely Śrī Harirāyajī’s original. The ending verse counter //3// present in all other verses is missing in SS 1915, almost as if when the editors added in “*ca gatim*” they accidentally replaced the verse number.

¹² Gopeśvarjī’s Brajbhāṣā *birājata*, a gloss on Śrī Harirāyajī’s Sanskrit *virājate*, can mean “shine, illuminate” but perhaps it has the more basic sense of “existing” or “being present,” as in contemporary usage, in which an exalted person, deity, or object is said to be “*birājamān hai*.” Indeed this is likely the meaning of Śrī Gopeśvarjī’s “*Bhagavān sāksāt virājamān he*” in the same sentence of this *ṭīkā*.

¹³ In *āryā* meter, the first and 3rd pādas are of 12 mātrā, the 2nd has 18 mātrā and the 4th has 15 mātrā, thus 30 mātrā in the first line and 27 in the second. MW defines it as “a kind of metre of two lines (each line consisting of seven and a half feet; each foot containing four instants, except the sixth of the second line, which contains only one, and is therefore a single short syllable; hence there are thirty instants in the first line and twenty-seven in the second),” 152.

Verse 4

*maryādā-mārga-vairāgyādy-abhāve'pi gatiṁ¹⁴ satām /
cintā-santāna-hantāro'py-ācārya-pada-reṇavaḥ¹⁵ //4//*

Even in the absence of renunciation and other [practices] of the lawful (*maryādā*) path, {Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas attain} the way of the enlightened ones (*satām*).
Indeed (*api*),¹⁶ the dust of Śrī Ācāryajī's feet are the “vanquishers of the offspring of anxiety.”¹⁷

Commentary

The way of the lawful (*maryādā*) path is this—that your end result (*gati*) arises after practicing wisdom and renunciation. However much practice individuals undertake, such is the highest result they can attain. By following the wisdom path they go to Satya Lok {Brahmā's realm}; this is the custom of the path of *maryādā* {the *pramāṇamārg*} [the path which follows bonafide teachings]. But in this Puṣṭi Mārga, the fruit arises through the power of grace (*prameya*), not through practices (*sādhana*). And so Bhagavān has said, in the eleventh skandha of the *Śrī Bhāgavata* [Bh.P.] [Skt.]¹⁸: “The Gopīs, cows, deer, birds, and these other simple-minded snakes, perfected only through bhāva alone, obtained [lit., came to] Me instantly (*añjasā*).”

In Braj, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān is beyond means (*niḥsādhana*); therefore he bestows the gift of the reward through the power of grace (*prameya*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides in this Puṣṭi Mārga in this very way, so he does not expect/depend upon any practice. He will definitely grant the reward independently, through the power of grace. Therefore Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas need never have worldly or divine anxieties. And so Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhuji has said in his *Navaratna Granth*

¹⁴ JMS gives accusative *gatiṁ*, which could almost be read as Śrī Harirāyaji supplying the *gatiṁ* from the Navaratna quote he gives in the prior verse 3, which he seems to have omitted from verse 3 for metrical reasons. SS 1915 gives *gatiḥ* which creates the nominative-genitive construction *gatiḥ satām*, “the way of enlightened ones/saints.” In either case, the subject, presumably “Puṣṭimārg Vaiṣṇavas” (as suggested by SS 1915), must be supplied.

¹⁵ A missing *pa* in “*pada*” is inserted marginally in JMS.

¹⁶ *api* in the second position, in my reading, serves to link this thought to what precedes it.

¹⁷ i.e., all existing anxieties and the further anxieties which are born from them.

¹⁸ *kevalenaiva bhāvena gopyo gāvo mṛgāḥ khagāḥ / ye'nye mūḍhadhiyo nāgāḥ siddha māmīyurañjasā //*

(*Nine Jewels*), [Skt.]¹⁹ “No anxiety whatsoever should ever be done by those whose souls are dedicated.” Those souls who have dedicated [themselves] need not have anxiety. And Śrī Gusāñjī has written in the *mangalācarana* [auspicious opening verse] of his commentary on *Navaratna*: [Skt.]²⁰ “The dust of Śrī Ācāryajī’s feet vanquishes the offspring of anxiety. I bow again and again to our very own Ācārya.” Through the grace (*prasāda*) of the dust of Śrī Ācāryajī’s lotus feet, all anxieties are destroyed by him automatically (*āputen*). I bow again and again to the lotus feet of this Śrī Ācāryajī.

Verses 5-7

*atas-tadīyāḥ kiṃ bhrāntānś-cintām*²¹ *vidadhate janāḥ /*
*jñānino ’pi*²² *na vai duḥkhaṃ citte dadhati laukikam //5//*
*sevā-rasādi-rahitās-citraṃ bhaktāḥ*²³ *kathaṃ tathā*²⁴ */*
yaiḥ svarūpasya sevāyām darśana-sparśanādikam //6//
anubhūtaṃ sadā teṣāṃ cittaṃ duḥkhayutaṃ katham /
paramānanda-saṃbandhe duḥkhaṃ tiṣṭhati naivahi //7//

Hence, why would those beings who belong to Him (*tadīyāḥ*) be confused and take anxiety [to heart]?²⁵

Indeed (*vai*), even practitioners of knowledge (*jñāninaḥ*) do not hold worldly suffering in their mind.

[And they are] devoid of the nectars (*rasa*) of *sevā*, etc.

How, in that case, would the bhaktas [do so]? [It would be] astonishing (*citraṃ*).²⁶

By those [bhaktas], the sight, touch, etc. of the Lord’s very form (*svarūpa*), in *sevā*, are constantly experienced. How could their minds be full of suffering?

In relationship with supreme bliss, suffering will certainly never remain.

¹⁹ *cintā kāpi na kāryā niveditātmabhiḥ kadāpi / 1a*

²⁰ *cintā-santāna-hantāro yatpādāmbuja reṇavaḥ / svīyānām tānnijācāryān praṇamāmi muhurmuḥ //*

²¹ SS 1915 and SS 1936 both lack the anuvāra present in JMS, leaving the nominative form *cintā*. The accusative seems necessary and warranted also by their respective glosses: “*cintā karata hen*” and “*cintā kyon karate hain*.”

²² In JMS an incorrect correction has been made changing *jñānino ’pi* to the impossible *jñānīnēpi*.

²³ JMS fem. sing. *bhaktā* is possible because there is no finite verb, but it seems more likely that the scribe has left out the visarga and that *bhaktāḥ* in the plural parallels *janāḥ*.

²⁴ The visarga after *tathā* in JMS is anomalous.

²⁵ *vidadhate* = *vi* + root *dhā* = “with *hrdaye*: to take to heart” (MW 967). Though the word *hrdaye* is not actually present here, I feel that it is prevalent enough in these passages and this context to warrant using this definition as the closest approximation.

²⁶ SS 1936: *isko dekh āścarya hotā hai*, presumably for *citraṃ*.

Commentary

Why are such Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas, Śrī Ācāryajī's intimate followers (*sevak*), confused and fallen into anxiety? For what reason? For even those souls in the path of knowledge don't hold worldly suffering in their mind. The fire of worldly suffering doesn't burn even their minds! And this is the Puṣṭi Mārga, in which relationship with Bhagavān has arisen though Śrī Ācāryajī. Lacking wisdom, they burn in anxiety. So, one should not have anxiety. The Lord is all powerful.

How can such Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas remain without the nectars of *sevā*? Wisdom practitioners (*jñānī*) have no knowledge of the nectars of *sevā*, but still they don't have anxiety. Yet this [grace-filled] one serves the very form of the manifest Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and beholds him, and touches his feet, so how can he still remain devoid of the experience of divine nectar (*Bhagavad-rasa*) in his mind? Therefore one must conclude that the mind is filled with anxiety, and that is why the experience of *rasa* has not occurred.

Such is the Puṣṭi Mārga, in which there is experience of the *bhāva* (divine essence) filled nature of all objects. Why would someone have suffering in the mind? Remaining ignorant, due to worldly anxiety alone, they are sad, and the experience of the *bhāva* filled nectars does not arise. Fruitful relationship with the supreme bliss form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa has come about through Śrī Ācāryajī; how can suffering remain in the heart of such dedicated Vaiṣṇavas? They are miserable from being ignorant, due to worldly anxiety.

Verse 8

*pitṛādayas-tu-sarve'pi sambandhād-duḥkha-hetavaḥ {sambandhāya-svahetavaḥ}²⁷ /
bahirmukha-janasyaiva²⁸ bāhirmukhyaṁ tatas-tyajet //8//*

But everyone, even one's father, etc.,²⁹ are sources of suffering,
due to relationship [with them].

Therefore, one should renounce the state of being turned away (*bāhirmukhyaṁ*)
of those very people who are turned away (*bahirmukha-janasya*).³⁰

Commentary

In the world, a father gives his son everything, and therefore he [the father] is beloved to him. In the same way, one's wife, sons, etc. are beloved to us, but in this Puṣṭi Mārga, direct relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa has arisen, whereby everything is perfected. Still, being ignorant and feeling anxiety, loving one's father, etc. for mundane purposes, they cultivate aversion [i.e., they turn away from the Lord and towards other relationships]. If one's relationship {with Śrī Kṛṣṇa} is contemplated, then renunciation of aversion will arise.

²⁷ As a variant reading for *sambandhād-duḥkha-hetavaḥ* (also attested in the JMS), SS 1915 gives *sambandhāya-sva-hetavaḥ* and the gloss "*sambandh ke liye bahirmukhakon apane kāraṇarūp he*" from which I am unable to draw clear meaning.

²⁸ In the place of *eva* as found at the end of JMS *bahirmukhajanasyaiva*, in SS 1915 *bahirmukhajanasyeva* ends with the particle *iva*, which might yield, "one should renounce the state of being turned away *like that of* people who are turned away.

²⁹ SS 1915 adds the footnote comment, "*moko pitāson, strīson, putrason kārya siddh hota he esen bahirmukhakon jñān hota he*—Those who are turned away think, 'For me, everything is fulfilled by my father, wife, and son.'"

³⁰ *bahirmukha*—"one who turn his face away, indifferent to; one who has his mind directed to external things," MW, 727. Because this term is used here in more of a negative light, to describe those who are turned away from the path, "indifferent" does not seem to suffice. Therefore, for the related Skt. *bāhirmukhya* and its gloss *bahirmukhatā*, I have chosen to work with "turned away" or the obsolete but very close English term "*aversion*—The act of turning away or averting," *American Heritage Dictionary*. One might also choose "heresy" and "heretical" as discussed by Broo, who argues that in a sense, "there can be no heresy in Hinduism, a religion that has never had any one overriding church or common system of belief. However, there is something that traditionally has been seen as a unifying bond for all orthodox Hindus: the Veda," (Broo, "Heresy and Heretics in the Bhāgavat Purāṇa," 146). Still more relevant is Broo's suggestion that "heresy in the Bhāgavata means disregarding the Vedas—here understood primarily as following the *varṇāśrama* system—and turning away from Bhagavān. As we shall see, it is ultimately the second factor that is decisive" (147). However, the heresy discussed by Broo is primarily *pākhaṇḍa* and seems reserved in the *Bhāgavata* for "the strange followers of Shiva, the Jains, and the Buddhists" (159-60). This seems somewhat different than *bahirmukha*, a category which even a Vaiṣṇava, it seems, may fall in and out of through bad company and therefore must vigilantly avoid. For that reason, and the fact that heresy does still, despite Broo's cogent argument, have a heavily Christian connotation that seems slightly misplaced in this context, I have tried to make my translations work with "averse" and "turned away."

Verse 9

*bahirmukhasya bādhante³¹ doṣā-daihika-mānasāḥ /
kṣīṇadhātorivārttasya rogā³² vātika-paikkāḥ // 9//*

The bodily and mental impurities of those who are averse afflict [them], like diseases of the windy and bilious humors (*vāta* and *pitta*) [afflict] those disturbed/oppressed by weakened humors.

Commentary

The association of averse people (*bahirmukha*) is an obstruction for Vaiṣṇavas. Through association, bodily and mental impurities will undoubtedly have an effect (*āyalāge*).³³ And so the example is given of a diseased person whose humors are weakened; the wind and bile humors all grip him (*āya grasen*). In the same way, all the impurities will afflict (*āya lage*) one who has association with people who are turned away.

Verse 10

*tannivṛttistu saṃpādyā satām saṅgena sevayā /
śrībhāgavata-pāṭhena tadarthaṃ³⁴śravaṇādapi //10//*

In contrast (*tu*), the cessation {of aversion}³⁵ is accomplished through the service and association of saintly beings (*sat*), and by reading the *Śrī Bhāgavata* [Bh.P.], and also from hearing its meanings.

³¹ What looks like *vādhante* in SS 1915 could also be *bādhante* as in SS 1936, and as in *bādhate* in verse 15 of this letter. Both seem to be permissible, *vādh* being listed as a variant of *bādh* by MW (940). In JMS, *ba* and *va* are, to my eye, indistinguishable.

³² SS 1915 gives *rogā*, whereas JMS repeats *doṣā* from the first half of the verse. *Rogā* seems to be the better reading, since repetition is generally avoided. Also, it would be confusing to use *doṣā*, because when placed with *vātikapaikkāḥ* it suggests its meaning as the three humors, but that meaning has already been fulfilled in this verse by the analogous term *dhātu*. Instead, it seems to beg the meaning “disease/impurity” (of the wind and bile humors), and for that reason *rogā* would seem to fit well. There is also the potential of an erroneous scribal repetition of *doṣā* from the previous half verse.

³³ *āyalāge*, *āya grasen* and *āya lage* in this passages could be read as V1 V2 constructions with the absolute form of the verb *ānā*.

³⁴ JMS lacks the anusvāra.

³⁵ SS 1915 considers the relative marker *tad* from *tannivṛtti* to refer to *bahirmukhatā kī nivṛtti*. Interestingly, however, instead of continuing to apply this idea to the upcoming instrumental and ablative compounds in verses 11 to 14, instead they interpret those compounds as methods for the removal not of *bahirmukhatā*, but of *cintā*. As will be seen in the *śabdārth* gloss of verse 11, they do so by referring ahead to the last pada of verse 14 (*sarvacintā nivarttate*) and explaining that through the methods listed in verses 11-14, “anxiety is removed, as related in the 14th verse—*cintā nivṛtta hota he ese caturdaśa ślok men saṃbandh he.*”

Commentary

Just like the illness of a sick person goes away after taking an effective (*sundara*) medicine, in that very same way, by having association with God’s people (*bhagavadīya*), his intimate (*tādṛśīya*)³⁶ Vaiṣṇavas, and by serving them, then one’s aversion is dispelled. Through the association of God’s people, all bodily and mental impurities are abolished. Here, one might doubt: meeting *tādṛśīya* Vaiṣṇavas is rare, so what to do if they can’t be found? In that case, it is answered: read the *Śrī Bhāgavata* [Bh.P.]. Why? Because the *Śrī Bhāgavata* is the very form (*svarūpa*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. And if one doesn’t have practice reading the *Śrī Bhāgavata*, then one should listen to it from the mouths of God’s followers on the path of grace (*puṣṭimārgīya bhagavadīya*). Then all impurities are dispelled.

Verse 11

*nivedana-smaraṇataḥ³⁷ sadbhiḥ saha kathādibhiḥ /
sadā nāma-grahaṇataḥ sadā śaraṇa-bhāvanāt //11//*

From remembering [one’s] dedication, by discussions, etc. with saintly beings,
from continually taking the [divine] names,
and from continually contemplating [divine] shelter...

Commentary

If the connection/opportunity to hear the *Śrī Bhāgavata* doesn’t occur, then one should make a habit of remembering one’s dedication day and night. One should also always listen to discussions (*kathā*) of the treatises of Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhujī and Śrī Gusāñjī from the mouths of God’s people. If even that is not possible, then always remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name.

³⁶ *tādṛśīya*, literally “resembling him” or “such as that” seems to have a sense of an advanced or intimate bhakta of the Lord.

³⁷ In JMS, the clever and clean technique of correcting transposed the characters *ta* and *na*, by adding a small 2 over the first and a 1 over the second, appears to have been done by the scribe, on the basis of similarity of these strokes with the verse numbers and the care taken not to disturb the characters. Other seemingly later corrections have been made with a “white-out” like substance applied to the characters, or a small u shape over the characters with corresponding corrections noted in the margins.

However, even remembering the name is difficult for these individuals, and so Śrī Gusānījī has said in his *Vijñapti*, [Skt.]³⁸ “Individuals don’t even have the eligibility to utter your name, due to the divine nature of your name and the worldly nature of this {human} speech.”

Therefore, if it is not even possible to take the name, then one should contemplate (*bhāvanā*) refuge. And so Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhujī has said in his *Vivekadhairyāśraya* (*Wisdom, Perseverance and Refuge*) [Skt.],³⁹ “Hari is in every respect the refuge in this world and beyond, in suffering and loss, sin, fear, and the unfulfillment of desires, etc., and in any offense (*droha*) [toward] a bhakta, in the absence of devotion, and transgression (*atikrama*) by [other] bhaktas; in the powerless state or in the state of power, Hari is in every respect the refuge.” One should contemplate refuge according to this and similar teachings.

³⁸ *tvannāmoccāraṇe’pyasti na jīveṣvādhikāritā / alaukikatvāttvannāmnastadvāco laukikatvataḥ //*

³⁹ *aihike pāraloke ca sarvathā śaraṇaṁ hariḥ / duḥkhaḥānautathā pāpe bhaye kāmādyapūraṇe // 10 //*
bhaktadrohe bhaktyabhāve bhaktaiścātikrame kṛte / aśakye vā suśakye vā sarvarthe śaraṇaṁ hariḥ //11//

Verse 12

*aṣṭākṣara-mahāmantra-kīrttanena*⁴⁰ *viśeṣataḥ* /
pañcākṣareṇa mantreṇa tadīyatva-vibhāvanāt //12//

...particularly⁴¹ by singing the eight-syllable mahāmantra [of shelter]
and from intense reflection⁴² upon the state of belonging to him [Kṛṣṇa]
through the five-syllable mantra [of dedication]...

Commentary

The eight-syllable mahāmantra is “*śrīkṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇam mama*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my refuge.” If one calls out singing this very mantra 24 hours a day, then everything will be perfected. And so in the [Bh.P.] twelfth skandha, Śrī Śukdevjī has said, [Skt.]⁴³ “O King! There is, of course, one great virtue of this Kali yuga which is [otherwise] a dump of impurities—simply from singing the praises of (*kīrtana*) Kṛṣṇa, [having become] free from mundane bondage [one] attains the Supreme (*param*).”⁴⁴

Therefore, one should sing the eight-syllable mantra and likewise, if there are intimate bhaktas (*tadīya*), meet with them and contemplate the five-syllable mantra [of dedication]. Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhujī has said in the *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*) treatise, [Skt.]⁴⁵ “Dedication is

⁴⁰ I do not find *kīrtana* with double *ta* ligature attested in the MW or Böhtlingk and Roth dictionaries. It could be that the manuscripts from which SS 1915 was constructed, like JMS, did not distinguish single and double *ta* characters with consistent clarity.

⁴¹ The adverbial *viśeṣataḥ* by strict pāda placement would refer to singing the eight-syllable mantra, though SS 1915 takes it with the latter half of the verse, that is to say, “particularly by reflecting with the five-syllable mantra.”

⁴² *vibhāvana* as “reflection on” is attested in *Kathāsaritsāgara* (MW, 978). I have chosen to add “intense” reflection, following SS 1915, because the prefix *vi-* is often interpreted to mean *viśeṣa*. Hence the SS 1915 gloss “*viśeṣabhāvana* son.” This is supported by MW: “*vi* may also be used in forming compounds not immediately referable to verbs, in which cases it may express “difference” (cf. 1. *vi-lakṣaṇa*), “change” or “variety” (cf. *vi-citra*), “intensity” (cf. *vi-karāla*), “manifoldness” (cf. *vi-vidha*)” etc. (949) (emphasis added).

⁴³ *Bh.P.* 12.3.51: *kalerdoṣanidhe rājannasti hyeko mahān guṇaḥ / kīrttanādeva kṛṣṇasya muktabandhaḥ param vrajat* // The vedabase.com version gives *kīrtanādeva* with the expected single *ta* (as discussed in footnote 83 above) and *muktasangah*, “free from worldly attachment.” MW, 821.

⁴⁴ SS 1915 “even though” (*yadyapi*) may be from reading *kaler* and *doṣanidhe* as genitive absolutes.

⁴⁵ *nivedanaṁ tu smartavyaṁ sarvathā tādṛśairjanaiḥ* //2a//

to be recalled in every way⁴⁶ with God's (*tādrśa*) people. Without the association of God's devotees (*bhagavadīya*), the feeling (*bhāva*) of dedication does not arise. Therefore remembering dedication depends on [the presence of] God's devotees.

Verse 13

*vairāgya-paritoṣābhyaṁ kṛṣṇa-saṁnihita-sthiteḥ*⁴⁷ /
laukika-kleśajaudāsyāt putrādy-ananurāgataḥ //13//

...with both total contentment (*paritoṣa*) and renunciation, from remaining near to Kṛṣṇa, from apathy/indifference borne of worldly affliction, and from lack of attachment⁴⁸ to one's son, etc....

Commentary

Maintain renunciation from the mundane world (from objects in this world with connection to this body). If there is renunciation from *saṁsāra*, then the pleasures and pains of this world will not obstruct the mind. Therefore, maintain renunciation. And one should remain content with whatever is obtained (remaining content with just whatever naturally comes and is obtained). Then the mind will not waver (*vikṣepa*).

Also, wherever Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides and *sevā* is done according to the ways of the Puṣṭi Mārga, by staying with people [in such situations], then *darśan* and *sevā* are possible. And so in his *Bhaktivardhinī* (*Increasing Bhakti*) treatise, Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu has said, [Skt.]⁴⁹ “{One should remain} in proximity or distance [to others], in such a way that the mind is not ruined.” If one remains in proximity and does *sevā*, then all the impurities of the mind will be eradicated.

⁴⁶ MW (1189) also suggests “at all times,” for *sarvathā*, but here the time frame seems to be limited to times when together with the *tādrśairjanaiḥ*.

⁴⁷ JMS *saṁnihita* is the more accurate spelling rather than SS 1915 *sannihita*.

⁴⁸ *an-anurāgata* is glossed by SS 1915 as lack of love (*a-prīti*) but I suspect the author's sense is more likely a warning against excessive attachment rather than a blanket suggestion to not love one's son and other relatives. MW (37) happens to list “attachment” as the first in a list of possible meanings for *anurāga*: “attachment, affection, love, passion.”

⁴⁹ *adūre viprakarṣe vā yathā cittarṁ na duṣyati* //8b//

However, in excessive proximity, impurities may arise. So stay at somewhat of a distance, but arrange (*so kare*) [your situation such that] daily *sevā* and *darśan* are possible. One should maintain indifference toward worldly strife in one’s mind (*mana*), refrain from cultivating strife in one’s mind (*citta*) and not maintain attachment to anyone—not bodily relations, son, wife, nor friends.

Verse 14

*gr̥havittādy-anāsktayā⁵⁰ tadīyeṣv-atirāgataḥ /
navaratnasya pāṭhena sarvacintā nivarattate //14//*

...by lack of attachment to home, wealth, etc., from exceeding love for those who belong to him [Kṛṣṇa], and by recitation of the *Navaratna* treatise, all anxiety is removed.

Commentary

One should not keep attachment in the home, wealth, etc.—these are the root of all anxiety. Therefore don’t have love for them. If one places attachment in Puṣṭi Mārga *bhagavadīyas* and recites (*pāṭh*) the *Navaratna* treatise as a daily habit as much as possible, then all anxieties will be removed from the mind. For the purpose of destroying anxiety, on the pretense of [instructing] the Vaiṣṇava Govinda Dube,⁵¹ Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhuḥjī has revealed the *Navaratna* treatise for all who follow this path (*etanmārgīya*). Therefore all anxiety will definitely be removed by the recitation of *Navaratna*.

⁵⁰ The erroneous *ya* in JMS *vittāya* has been corrected in the margin with *dya*.

⁵¹ Cf. 84V #34, in which Vallabhācārya composes *Navaratna* and sends it in a letter to his disciple Govinda Dube to relieve his mental strife and inability to focus on *sevā*. As reported by Govinda Dube in a letter to his guru: “Mahārāj! Mere man men bahot vighraha rahai. so sevā men citta lāge nāhīn.” Gokulnāthajī and Harirāyājī, 84V, 224.

Verse 15

*evam nivṛtta-vaimukhyam janam duḥkham na bādhate /
atas-tanmātra-yatnaistu bhavitavyam bhavādṛśaiḥ⁵² //15//*

Indeed, suffering does not afflict people whose aversion has been dispelled. Hence, what is to be done by one such as yourself is only efforts [which remove aversion, as described above].

Commentary

For one who has removed aversion through all of the Bhagavān-related dharmas described above, all suffering will be banished. He or she will attain supreme happiness in the mind. In this way, many efforts to remove suffering should be made. These efforts increase divine mood (*bhāva*). Those who have swift bestowal of the reward in their fate will be able to make the efforts that increase *bhāva*.

⁵² SS 1915 glosses *bhavādṛśeḥ* as *tumhāre sārīkhe ko*, “to/for one like you” (based on the equivalent terms *sarikhā/sarīkhe/sarīkha/sarisa* meaning *samān*, *sadrśa*, SBK3, 273-4). JMS *bhavādṛśaiḥ* is instrumental pl. of *dṛśa* and I think an honorific pl. signifying Harirāyaji’s respect for his younger brother’s devotional attainments and abilities. SS 1915 *bhavādṛśeḥ*, which would be the abl. or gen. sing. of *dṛśi*, is most likely a simple typographical error of omitting the diacritic mark.

Verse 16-7

*duḥkhena na vṛthā neyaḥ kālah parama-durlabhaḥ⁵³/
kṛṣṇa-sevānukūlastu nijācāryāśrayāśritaiḥ // 16 //
drutaṁ heyā vṛthā cintā prāptāpi nija-doṣataḥ /
cittodvegam⁵⁴ vidhāyāpīty-etad-vacana-cintanāt // 17//*

This time, which is extremely rare, should not be spent uselessly in suffering, for it is conducive to serving Kṛṣṇa.

By [or, with]⁵⁵ those who have taken shelter in the refuge of our own Ācārya, useless anxiety, even if incurred due to one's own faults, is to be quickly relinquished, by reflection upon these teachings:

“Even when anxiety (*udvega*) develops (*vidhāya*) in the mind (*citta*)...”

Commentary

This time is extremely rare/difficult to attain (*durlabha*). A time like this will not come again. This human body is conducive to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sevā, so it should not be squandered (*khove*) uselessly by engaging in this worldly anxiety. Why is that? Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sevā is possible with this body. Puṣṭi Mārga sevā is not present in other yugas, and therefore this time is rare [and difficult to attain even] for Brahma and other [divinities]. Where, in other yugas, is there connection with Brahman through Śrī Ācāryajī? Where then, the refuge of Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhuḥ? And where then is the refuge of the personal devotees (*nijasevak*), the intimate bhaktas (*tadṛśīya*) who take the refuge of Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhuḥ?

⁵³ The anomalous doubled *lla* ligature in SS 1915 *durlabhaḥ* is not present in Hindi 1936 or JMS, which give *durlabhaḥ*.

⁵⁴ The Sanskrit term *udvega* (adj. “going swiftly” and m. “anxiety,” MW, 192) interestingly hints at the physiological link between anxiety and an increase in blood flow, heartbeat, breathing, etc.

⁵⁵ SS 1915 *śabdārtha* gives two alternative explanations for *nijācāryāśritaiḥ*—“Vaiṣṇavas who have taken refuge in the shelter of Śrī Ācāryajī, or, Vaiṣṇavas who have taken refuge in the *bhagavadīyas* who take firm refuge in Śrī Ācāryajī.” Both are corroborated by Śrī Gopeśvarjī's commentary on these verses, in which he recommends taking the refuge of both Śrī Ācāryajī and the bhaktas (*bhagavadīya ko āśraya tathā apāne Śrī Vallabhācāryajī ko āśraya kari*). The ambiguity in the *mūl* verse, whether intended or not, seems to stem from the instr. case of *nijācāryāśritaiḥ* and whether it is governed by the anxiety being relinquished (*heyā*) or the time being spent (*neyaḥ*). In the first option, the useless anxiety (*vṛthā cintā*) of verse 17 should be relinquished (*heyā*) **by** those whose refuge is the shelter of Śrī Ācāryajī. In the second option, time should be spent **with** those whose refuge is the shelter of Śrī Ācāryajī. The second option seems more of a stretch, because it requires reading *neyaḥ* first with the negative particle *na* and then without it (“time should not be spent / should be spent”), although the particle *tu* (“but rather”) does facilitate such a contrast. Therefore I believe both options are feasible and may have even been intended by Śrī Harirāyajī.

Thus, considering these things in the mind, knowing this time to be extremely rare, do not waste it by keeping the mind in worldliness, suffering and affliction. Taking the refuge of those who belong to God (*bhagavadīya*) and our Śrī Vallabhācāryajī, the thing to do is definitely Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sevā. This body and time are conducive to sevā, so knowing that, one should not remain for a single moment without sevā.

One should very quickly renounce anxiety. From a single anxiety, multiple impurities (*doṣa*) are incurred. Therefore, having contemplated (*cintana*) the teachings of *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*), one should without a doubt renounce anxiety. And so Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu has said in *Navaratna*, [Skt.]⁵⁶ “Even when anxiety develops in the mind, having understood that ‘whatever Hari will do, that alone is his play,’ one should renounce anxiety immediately.” Having quickly renounced anxiety through this teaching, if one becomes engaged in Bhagavān-related dharma as described above, and with focused mind does bhagavad-sevā, [divine] remembrance, associates with intimate bhaktas (*tadṛśīya*), daily reflects upon (*cintana*) and recites and considers the devotional meanings (*bhāva*)⁵⁷ of this *Navaratna* treatise, then anxiety will be dispelled.

*Thus concludes the 23rd Śikṣāpatra composed by Śrī Harirāyajī,
including the Brajbhāṣā commentary written by Śrī Gopeśvarjī.*

⁵⁶ *cittodvegāṁ vidhāyāpī hariryadyatkarīṣyati / tathaiva tasya līleti matvā cintāṁ drutaṁ tyajet // Navaratna 8*

⁵⁷ I have rendered the ever-elusive “*bhāva*” here as “devotional meanings,” because it is used here in reference to a scriptural text. I have in mind here the distinction commonly made between a given passage’s *śabdārth* (surface, literal meaning) and *bhāvārth* (inner, devotional meaning).

Audio Commentary on *Śikṣāpatra* from a Sampradāya Authority

An additional layer of interpretation of *Śikṣāpatra*, with particular reference to letter 18, is found in a series of lectures given in the 20th century by the late Gosvāmī Rāṅcoḍācāryajī (1931-1990 CE), also known as Śrī Prathameśjī. I have transcribed and translated a selection of Prathameśjī’s teachings, variously termed *pravacan* or *vacanāmṛt* (nectar speech), from a collection of tapes personally given to me by his disciples in Mumbai, Kolkata, and America. The tapes have since been made available to others in the community, though they have not yet been officially published. These lectures are analogous to *kathā*, described by Lutgendorf as “slow, systematic, storytelling recitation, interspersed with prose explanations, elaborations, and homely illustrations of spiritual points.”¹

A widely respected public figure and authority of the Vallabha Sampradāya, Prathameśjī was the 14th Tilkāyat of the *pratham pīth* (the house descending from Śrī Gusāñjī’s first son, Girdharjī). To my knowledge, two books about Prathameśjī have been published. In 1993 the International Puṣṭimārgīya Vaiṣṇava Council (*Antarrāṣṭriya Puṣṭimārgīya Vaiṣṇava Pariṣad*), an organization founded by Prathameśjī, published *Prathameś Smṛti*, a several hundred page volume containing Prathameśjī’s letters, poems, essays, as well as anecdotes and biographical essays written by Vaiṣṇavas. Prathameśjī’s close American follower, Shyamdas, later published *Ocean of Grace: The Teachings of His Holiness Goswami Shri Prathameshji* [Pratham Peeth Publications, 2007], a collection of Prathameśjī’s teachings and dialogues between him and Shyamdas.

Out of the nearly 50 digitalized files I created from cassette tapes of Prathameśjī’s teachings, several were labeled “*Śikṣāpatra*.” I have referenced 3 of these sound files in this

¹ Lutgendorf, 115.

thesis and transcribed one of them in its entirety. Two files come from a cassette tape labelled “*Śikṣāpatra* no.1 tā. 1” (side A and B), and the third file from a tape labelled “*Rāsapancādhyāyī*,” referring to the 5 *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* chapters on the Rāsa Līlā. The latter tape may not have been part of the same lecture series, but it contains direct reference and material relevant to the *Śikṣāpatra*. I suspect that both sessions were recorded in Prathameśjī’s Kolkata home in teachings given to an intimate group of around 10 to 30 disciples.

Based on the sparse dates listed on some of the tapes, a series of about 10 taped lectures on *Śikṣāpatra* may have been given around 1981. The lectures seem to be a typical presentation of spiritual teachings designed to enlighten and inspire the listeners, to clarify subtle points about Vaiṣṇava dharma and to elucidate the practice and lifestyle of the Puṣṭi Mārga. Prathameśjī explains difficult terms used in the *Śikṣāpatra* and elaborates on the points and examples given in the text. Of further value are his interpretations of the meaning and intentions of the authors and, in particular, the contemporary practical relevance of their teachings.

In Prathameśjī’s *Śikṣāpatra vacanāmṛt*, there is less focus on the lofty heights of devotional bliss or the transcendental themes emphasized in much of the scholarly analysis of bhakti poetry, performance, and philosophy. Rather, Prathameśjī addresses human emotions and challenges to devotional life, expressed in everyday terms of the world. His teachings are drawn from Vedic and sampradāyik sources as well as his own experience. They describe how to maintain connection to Kṛṣṇa in a daily, dhārmik life, in the midst of cooking, playing hide and seek with children, making mistakes, dealing with the anger or scorn from others, experiencing financial gain and loss, etc.

Among the challenges of deciphering Prathameśjī’s words are the rapidly recited Sanskrit passages, high register Sanskrit Hindi, and a mix of Gujarati, English, Urdu, and Brajbhāṣā

terminology. His speech is clear, forceful, and dynamic, but in some cases his volume decreases to inaudible levels at the end of sentences. In addition, there are a proliferation of background noises, including car and bicycle horns, squawking parrots (which he kept as pets), chiming clocks, the ringing of old-fashioned telephones, and some unfortunately ill-timed coughing from the audience. Nevertheless, I have been able to construct what I feel is a representative sample of his teachings, with clear and relevant illustrations of Prathameśjī's interpretation of the *Śikṣāpatra*.

I have denoted places in the transcription where there were questionable or difficult 'readings' with an asterisk and the recording time. Where I could hazard a close guess as to the words being spoken, I placed them in parentheses (). Curved brackets { } indicate where I have supplied a word which I did not hear but seems necessary or understood. At times Prathameśjī may start one a sentence with a structure but then make a syntactic shift in the middle, in such a way that would break the fluidity of a written sentence. In such cases I have simply used an em-dash to note the break, reserving ellipsis for the few cases in which there is a gap in the tape or for gaps within the two excerpted transcriptions (Vacanāmṛt B and C). I emphasized with boldface type the passages I felt were most relevant to the discussion at hand.

Vacanāmṛt (A):

Prathameśjī lecture, “Śikṣāpatra no.1 (side B)”

The devotee of the Lord who leads a life conducive to the Lord's sevā has no anxiety and has full faith in Ācāryacaraṇa (Śrī Vallabhācārya). Therefore, this faith itself becomes the cause of the removal of her¹ life anxieties. In addition to explaining this, Śrī Harirāyajī has also given

¹ To avoid confusion with masculine pronouns used for God, Prabhu, Kṛṣṇa, etc., I have chosen to use the feminine pronoun for the individual (*jīva*, *ātmā*, or *bhakta*) referred to throughout Prathameśjī's speech. Although

us the teaching to reflect deeply on Śrī Ācāryajī's words.² What is this deep reflection?³ It is to reflect deeply on the bhāva of Śrī Ācāryacaraṇa's words and the fact that the Lord releases his bhaktas from anxiety—to contemplate in this way the plays of the Lord (*bhagavat-līlā*). [The bhakta] has ingrained this in his heart and mind.

In *Navaratna*, Ācārya said these words: “Those whose souls are dedicated have no need for anxiety whatsoever.”⁴ See, you are going to think about life, about yourself, about issues relating to your family. But if you think only about all these things—look, think about one more thing, that, “I am a dedicated soul. I have dedicated my soul before the Lord, offered it (*samarpaṇ*). And I did it through love.”

What is the meaning of this, “I have done it [offered everything] through love”? In the world, when offering is discussed—how many ways and with how many feelings do we offer ourselves in the world?⁵ But here, by this statement “*samarpitātmabhiḥ*”⁶ by saying this word, look—[the bhakta] is a dedicated soul. She does not become dedicated through any grandeur, or self-interest, or anything else; her offering is through natural love. The specialness of offering through natural love has been explained. She takes the shelter of the Lord, who is so powerful, and becomes dedicated to Him. But still she doesn't beg from Him. [Rather], evoking devotional moods (*bhāvanā*), she prays for Prabhu's pleasure—that is why she undertakes activities.

Prathameśjī does use masculine endings (*yah kartā hai*, etc.) I feel he is still referring to bhaktas in general and therefore to bhaktas of any gender.

² “*Ācārya kī vāṇī kā viśeṣa prakār se cintan*” is Prathameśjī's gloss on Śrī Harirāyājī's *prabhuvākyaṃ vicintyatām*, from *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3a.

³ Prathameśjī's speaking style sometimes takes a question and answer format, loosely analogous to the traditional Sanskrit commentarial format of *katham̐bhūtanī* (“how so?”). Cf. Tubb and Boose, *Scholastic Sanskrit*, 149-150.

⁴ *Navaratna* 1a, also quoted by Śrī Harirāyājī in *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3a. Redington admiringly notes regarding this verse: “Vallabha stretches the Sanskrit language in his effort to emphasize that there are simply no grounds for worry (*cintā kāpi na . . . kadāpīti*).” Redington and Vallabhācārya, *The Grace of Lord Krishna*, 78.

⁵ I am not clear on the intended sense here of “*kisī kī*.” Maybe he meant “in whatever ways” or maybe that we offer ourselves in the world “and to other people.”

⁶ I suspect Prathameśjī meant to say *niveditātmabhiḥ*, which has basically the same meaning as *samarpitātmabhiḥ*.

It is also said here, *niveditātmabhiḥ*—I have dedicated my soul, and in doing so I am greatly pleased. Having established a relationship of intimacy with Bhagavān, and experiencing that intimacy, a kind of anxiety-free state (*niścintatā*) comes into her life. Vallabhācārya himself experienced this anxiety-lessness and, with the continual bliss, the (discrimination of?) bliss of that experience he was able to write these words: “Those whose souls are dedicated have no need for anxiety whatsoever.”⁷ We are dedicated souls; in our lives there is no need for anxiety. Have faith in this. Bhagavān is of the path of grace. Bhagavān grants grace through nourishment (*puṣṭi*). He will not present us in life with a worldly way (*gati*).⁸ This soul-faith (*ātmaviśvās*)⁹ was stated with the term, “by those whose souls who are dedicated.”

After explaining the prime importance of soul dedication, one other thing has been said: that the relationship with Bhagavān is a soul-connection, not a bodily connection like in the world. Anxieties are possible in bodily relationships; there is no anxiety in the soul connection. And the soul relationship will not break, will not scatter. There is no dissatisfaction in them, no affliction, nothing like that. And for that reason [Harirāyājī] has provided a very great support[*].

⁷ Again [cf. footnote 3], *Navaratna* 1a, also quoted by Śrī Harirāyājī in *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3a.

⁸ Prathameśjī is expanding here on *Navaratna* 1. After quoting *Navaratna* 1a, as Harirāyājī also did in *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3a, Prathameśjī is paraphrasing here *Navaratna* 1b [*bhagavānapi puṣṭistho na kariṣyati laukikīm ca gatim*]. This is no surprise, as Prathameśjī clearly had these verses on the tip of his tongue, and also because he is teaching from not only the *mūl Śikṣāpatra* verses, but also from Gopeśvarjī’s commentary, where *Navaratna* 1b is given along with other quoted passages which, as we will see, Prathameśjī also quotes to his listeners.

Redington, in his translation of *Navaratna*, takes *gati* as “course,” justified by this analysis: “Why are there no grounds for worry? Because not only the Grace devotee, but Krishna, too, ‘is on, or in, Grace’ (*puṣṭistho*), i.e., the Path which the devotee is on is the Blessed Lord’s own native element. Therefore, says Vallabha, Krishna would never cast a soul out of the element in which they both now naturally abide, by forcing the soul into a way of life—an atmosphere of thoughts, expectations, and actions—that is worldly, rather than graced. To put it more exactly in terms of the ‘path’ metaphor Vallabha is using: Krishna, having accepted someone onto the path of Grace, will not make him or her follow a ‘worldly course’ (*gati*=path).” Redington and Vallabhācārya, *The Grace of Lord Krishna*, 78. The Sampradāya commentator Śrī Puruṣottamājī, in his *Navaratna* commentary, glosses *gatim* with *rītim* (way, custom, manner). Gosvami Rajkumar, 29.

⁹ It sounds as if Prathameśjī is quoting the word “*ātmaviśvās*” from somewhere, but since I cannot locate it within the *Śikṣāpatra* passages under discussion, nor in *Navaratna*, I have instead surmised that he was simply referring to his own comment (“Have faith in this”) and is quoting from the two texts only the single term, “*niveditātmabhiḥ*.”

Harirāyacaraṇa¹⁰ says this,¹¹ that “You think all about all these things related to the body. You think about absolutely everything under the sun.¹² At least think about our Ācārya’s significant statement and then see. Deeply contemplate Śrī Mahāprabhu’s statement and then see that, ‘There is no need for anxiety whatsoever.’”

If one has learned to be free of anxiety, and to do contemplation (*cintana*), [then] one has learned to give the inner meanings (*bhāvanā*) of the *Navaratna* treatise a [proper] place in one’s life. Actually, then, you will be able to carry out the Lord’s work with firmness, without faltering (*vicalit*) [even] in the midst of so many problems. **To lead an anxiety-free life in order to carry out the Lord’s work with firmness—that is one aim. And just to live an anxiety-free life in the world—that is a different goal.**

Previously Śrī Harirāyajī explained, while describing the intimate bond between servant and master (*svāmī aur sevak*), that the Lord, if he sees his dear ones (*sajjan*) have anxiety, when He sees their face He thinks, “What can I say?”¹³ This hardship—that no trouble (*śram*) be given to Bhagavān in my life—the person who pays close attention to this is a dedicated soul. Whoever has given extensive thought to Mahāprabhu’s teachings has not given a thought to petty worldly issues. What is the point here? No matter what kind of dealings (*vyavahāra*) [people might conduct] with us, we should not have anxiety over that. We should contemplate Mahāprabhu’s utterances. And from contemplating again and again in the heart—what are the effects of contemplation, the effects of thoughts—this analysis has been presented before you previously.¹⁴

¹⁰ As in *Ācāryacaraṇa* for Vallabhācārya, this inclusion of *caraṇa* (“feet”) conveys the utmost respect for Harirāyajī.

¹¹ Here, in the style of Gopeśvarjī’s commentary, Prathameśjī takes the liberty of speaking in the authoritative voice of Harirāyajī.

¹² My free translation of the idiom “*duniyā bhar kī bāten—enough things to fill the whole world.*”

¹³ This could be a reference to *Śikṣāpatra* 1.1, in which Gopeśvarjī comments “If, with agitation (*udvega*) in the mind, overwhelmed by worldly and Vedic activities, or afflicted by those duties, you go to see Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa, who is the form of bliss, seeing the individual’s troubled face, becomes indifferent (*udāsīn*).”

¹⁴ This could refer to a prior *Śikṣāpatra* teaching or an earlier teaching given by Prathameśjī.

If this kind of effect comes into our lives, **then a natural tendency toward anxiety-lessness will arise in our lives. The absolutely most major catastrophes will not be able to shake us.**

Those who remain in Bhagavān’s shelter, who live with Bhagavān—when we contemplate and see His plays (*līlā*), then when adversity arises we search for solutions instead of faltering—they don’t falter. **The reason is that they have full faith (*bharosā*) in their Lord.**

We can see this in the tenth skandha in the *līlā* chapters of the *Bhāgavata* [*Purāṇa*]. If a man gets disturbed then his intelligence can become confused.¹⁵ Like a child, for example. When playing with a child it’s natural that a little chaos should happen. But even in this chaos, people search for solutions instead of becoming flustered. That is it. And they search for such a solution having understood in their mind there is faith in the Lord.

In the same way, we should have faith in Mahāprabhu’s words, “*vicintyatām*”—deeply contemplate and then see. Prepare the heart and mind for this. People might say, “Alright, fine.” But for this remembrance of soul dedication to arise in us—if we even want to remember, as Ācārya has said—for this remembrance of soul dedication to arise is no simple technique (*sahaj sādhana*). We will remember the world. We will remember other things. Some insignificant little inconvenience, or some behavior of someone else towards us—the memory of these remains, but the recall of soul dedication does not.

In this situation, how can it be accepted that this term was rightly said [by Vallabhācārya], “*niveditātmabhiḥ*.” Sure, we have performed dedication, verbally, but we haven’t been able to reach the depth of this; we don’t understand the depth [of dedication]. In answer to this doubt, Śrī Harirāyajī says in Ācārya’s very words: “If there is an equality between

¹⁵ I am confused by this passage, as I cannot quite make out some of the key terms.

both those with and without knowledge who are accomplished [dedicated].”¹⁶ Here they say that no matter how knowledgeable or unknowledgeable you may be—both are equal in this regard, whether we have understanding or not. But if we have done soul dedication, with knowledge or without, then actually—if one is ignorant it makes no difference to Bhagavān. Both [types] who have dedicated [themselves] before Bhagavān will be considered equal. Bhagavān doesn’t look at it as if this one [dedicated himself] having thought it over and this one with ignorance, not realizing that the soul dedication occurred.

So, why has this been said? Because in a matter of speaking, in our lives we have dedicated our soul. But our inner thoughts/tendencies have not been able to accept that soul dedication in our heart. We are dedicated to the world, not dedicated in soul. We are dedicated to the world, and that is why again and again our mind slips into the world, and our mind views things from a worldly perspective only. [The mind] doesn’t know the way to contemplate things from a divine (*alaukik*) perspective. And if it doesn’t, then what to do? There is no need to have anxiety about this. **It is Bhagavān’s inherent nature to make an individual anxiety free. What is important is to understand the way [he does so]. People say, “How to understand that?” [The answer is:] “vicintyatām”**—In the same way you turn towards the world and ruminate over world [affairs], having [...] a little, contemplate Bhagavān in this way. Try to make your mind understand that “I am a dedicated soul.” Explain [to your mind] the significance of that.

Bhagavān also removes the anxiety of those who don’t understand the greatness [of dedication*]. Many people could not fathom Bhagavān’s greatness; but they went to the Lord’s

¹⁶ Quoting *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3b.

shelter, or took His name, and Prabhu removed their anxiety and uplifted them.¹⁷ That is why they explain to us here that, look, when Bhagavān makes someone anxiety-free, he does so through his greatness and virtues. He doesn't do so looking at that person's faults (*durguṇa*); this is the greatness of Bhagavān.

Along with explaining Bhagavān's greatness, Ācārya has explained to us one more thing: just as when Bhagavān graces an individual, He does not look at her transgressions or faults, in the same way, we should not focus on the sins or faults of anyone else. If you want to focus on something, focus on “*niveditātmabhiḥ*” (that those whose souls are dedicated)[need not worry]. Focus on (what has been said about) soul-dedicated individuals. In fact, this is a very deep concept—the individual who leads an offered (*samārpit*) life and would undertake all duties in the world having considered them to be service to the Lord, and while doing the Lord's service (*sevā*), and can remember [dedication] in this way—then what is there to remember about dedication in the world? Actually we offer ourselves in the world to others out of our own self-interest (*svārth*). See, when Bhagavān desires his bhaktas it is not out of self-interest. In that way, **learn to offer your soul with a little mood of unselfishness (*nisvārth*). If we can understand this: everything we do in this world is upon our self-interest—this is really important, that if we can give up [this habit of] acting in the world after thinking about everything from the perspective of our own self-interest, then we would be very happy!** And why should we want to do so? So that we can remember that we are dedicated souls.

In addition, in life we don't have so much method (*sāadhan*).¹⁸ Without method, what reward can be attained in life? Why, without such methods, what reward can be attained through

¹⁷ For example, the Bh.P. (6.2.13) relates a story of a sinful Brahmin, Ajamila, who is spared from hell simply because while dying he called out to his son, whose name was one of Bhagavān's names, “Narāyaṇa.”

¹⁸ Here Prathameśjī begins to explain *Śikṣāpatra* 18.4a.

knowledge? It is clear. An individual may or may not have a knowledge-based practice. The Lord considers only that she offers [herself] to Him; He doesn't think of anything else. If one has offered one's soul without understanding, then one thing has been stated in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* [sixth skandha]: “This supreme name recitation, [if praised] either out of ignorance or understanding...”¹⁹ [If one can take] Bhagavān's name with knowledge or without—what is the greatness of the name? That the remembrance of [Bhagavān's] form (*svarūp*) occurs. Remembrance of His special characteristics occurs. Just like if we remember the name of one of our own people [friends, etc.], then that person's physical form and characteristics are also remembered.

For those people who sing all of Bhagavān's praises (*kīrtan*), the Lord eliminates all of their sins, like fire burns all impurities. That is why suffering (*duḥkh*) can't touch one who has dedicated her soul to Bhagavān, whether with or without understanding. This point was said to explain to us something about soul dedication. **Why doesn't suffering touch her? Because she has firm faith (*dr̥ḍha viśvās*) in her mind.** The more inner firmness she has, the less suffering will touch her. The more health the body has, the less disease it will harbor. Therefore—[and by the way,] pleasure and pain (*sukh aur duḥkh*) are related to the mind [not the body]—having thought about these things, [Harirājāyī] says, look, if someone does soul dedication with knowledge, then a slightly better situation will arise. As Ācārya stated, “*jñānaśced bhajate kṛṣṇastasmān nāstyadi...*”²⁰—if a person of wisdom worships Kṛṣṇa, there is nothing greater than that.

But it's also fine if one doesn't have wisdom. Those animals of Vrindavan who remembered the Lord with love, they too were blessed. They were not able to offer the Lord

¹⁹ This quote was provided by Gopeśvarjī in his commentary on *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3-4a.

²⁰ I have not been able to locate this reference.

anything, but through the glance of love (they attained love*). This is something worth noticing: love for the Lord was awakened within those animals too. Through recognizing the Lord's form and beautiful attraction, His love towards those animals, an (immobility*) arose in them.²¹

We have never reflected on that form. We have reflected on life [only], like animals. We certainly have made [for ourselves] such a life. But we have not been able to arouse in our inner being (*antahkaraṇa*) that love that those animals could just by seeing the Lord. Why? Because Prabhu had loving affection (*anurāga*) for them, and they had love for Him. Both understood the language of love. So whether it was with ignorance or whatever else, an attraction for the Lord arose within them. And it happened through acceptance. Otherwise they would have been startled [and fled], it's obvious.

In this way, those animals, even after seeing the Lord so much, (powerless*), [knew that], "We are unable to give Prabhu anything." Divine dharma arose in the lives of those animals who saw the Lord. At the time of seeing Him, or hearing the sound of His flute, they left behind their bodily dharma. By actually contemplating that beautiful sound and listening to it, they too were affected. Those animals too had an experience of intimacy with Bhagavān.

Why has this been explained to us? Look here. If you are an offered soul, and you feel the experience of soul dedication to the Lord, feel the experience of intimacy, then the afflictions of worldly relationships, that are bodily connections, those connections which you establish [mistakenly] thinking that the body is the soul, those afflictions (will not arise). From this, a way to rise above bodily and mundane afflictions has been described. People who can rise a little bit above these [afflictions] in life and think [clearly], those individuals can orient their lives in the

²¹ This passage was hard to fully understand and there seems to be a short gap in the recording (the only noticeable one), but if I have understood correctly the word which seems to include *niścal* may refer to the depiction of the deer, cows etc. becoming immobilized at the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute [cf. Bh.P. 10.21].

right direction, take the right steps, and progress. So that is why [Harirāyajī] said that if there is a follower of the path of wisdom, she will be able to see these connections and understand—only if she has dedicated her soul with understanding. The things I have offered towards the world, what a difference there is between those affairs and the Lord’s affairs! Those things which are not connected to the Lord’s play (*līlā*), she sees in them the worldly aspect of the illusory world (*prapañc*). And when she understands it is illusion, then automatically suffering, a feeling of separation, will arise in her mind, that “this lacks the physical presence of the Lord.” See, that is why she becomes engaged (*tatpar*) in contemplation of the Lord (not of the world*), [because she sees that this thing or situation] is not my Lord’s. This knowledge is rooted in (or gives rise to)²² love.

If relationship with Bhagavān is in the bag (lit., pocket), and she sees this, the force (*sphūrṭi*) of the Lord will arise. And where there is not connection to Bhagavān, she sees something else. Then the force will arise that, “Look, these [people] have no knowledge of relationship with the Lord, and that is why they have done this sort of thing—this is the illusory world.” Even if that person is one’s own spouse! Those who lack knowledge of the divine dharma and connection to Bhagavān, [even if] one’s own (*) relatives, are not able to accept dhārmik values within their inner being. We might call them (lazy*) or anything else, but we don’t attempt to understand their characteristics, and we don’t get disturbed by such things. Nor should the effect of their (*) impact us. Why? In bodily relationships, when these people experience some slight decrease in happiness because of us, then they will scream and shout [at us]. They only know how to fuss over bodily-related issues and nothing else. These are our worldly relationships. True, others should not experience hardship on our account; the Lord’s

²² *mūlak* (OHED, 830).

own ones (*bhagavadīya*) pay attention to this. When we [are careful not to] trouble the Lord, then how could we trouble others? But the ways in which the false world always influences [those people], that worldly force is comprehended by the wise individual. Her thinking and contemplation are beyond that, on another level. Because these people have no relationship to Bhagavān and simply remain agitated by worldly connections. Understanding this, the awareness arises in [the bhakta] that, “If [those people] were to contemplate the Lord, if they were to remember, how happy they would be!” That doesn’t mean that she gives them teachings (*upadeś*). In the illusory world, if Bhagavān is not there, a feeling of separation from Him will arise, in the same way that when Kṛṣṇa disappeared [and hid] within the Brajbhaktas’ hearts, the feeling of separation from Him arose. When we contemplate Bhagavān, at that time we don’t contemplate the illusory world.

What is the point here? That even in such situations, we are not to contemplate the behaviors and thoughts of our own associates or other people from a worldly perspective. Their **worldly discussions are limited to the world; one should not bring such things into one’s contemplation. This point is very useful for our practical lives (*vyavahāra*)**. If sacred mood (*bhagavat-bhāva*) becomes stable, then (what to say). From that [reflection on other worldly matters] the sacred mood does not stabilize. One is pained, “Why? Why did this happen?” If that kind of pain arises then the sacred mood has not become firm. If one has dedicated one’s soul with understanding, then the sacred mood will become stable; if done without understanding, then remembrance of the Lord comes. There is no need for any further anxiety about that.

If we have ruminated upon someone’s worldly affairs, then we ourselves (become turned away*). That is why Ācārya has explained to us that regardless of whether or not we remember that we are dedicated souls, it’s not about remembering. We have made the dedication. The

example is given, that whether you touch fire knowingly or unknowingly, your hand will get burned.²³ By the same token, if you dedicate your soul without knowledge, even then, Bhagavān will not bestow different rewards for knowledgeable or unknowledgeable individuals. He will only consider that “She is mine.” This is very important. Such a great outlook has been given here—that there is no difference in the Lord’s view. Whether the soul has understanding or not, however she is, she is His. If Bhagavān thinks like that, or—whatever individual thinks, “I am the Lord’s” has made an effort for inward experience. This is what Ācārya has explained to us.

Harirāyajī says that when we ask, [regarding] Mahāprabhu’s utterances, “How should I know, how can I understand?”—one thing Harirāyajī has (delineated*) a bit for us is that this [question] is not necessary. “If there is an equality between both those with and without knowledge who are accomplished [dedicated]”—if you consider both equal: “then without any means, what fruit can occur from knowledge?”²⁴ So Ācārya has said, regarding one who has dedicated herself with or without knowledge, that “*yaiḥ kṛṣṇasāt*”—think about these very words—“*yaiḥ kṛṣṇasāt*,” one who has become with Bhagavān, “*kṛtprāṇa*” [allied her life force], “*teṣām kā paridevanā*”—what affliction could obstruct her? So Bhagavān, who is “*uttamaśloka*”—what is the meaning of this word, “*uttamaśloka*”? It is “the one with so much fame.” If you want to contemplate something, contemplate Bhagavān’s fame. If you want to understand things in life, then make an effort to understand His characteristics. There is no reason to contemplate people’s qualities or defects.

If we start to place the inner meanings (*bhāvanā*) of these words in our minds, then there’s one thing—Bhagavān will remove all of our impurities. **Therefore those people who have made the offering to Bhagavān, for them it is appropriate not to have anxiety, but to**

²³ This analogy is elaborated in the commentary on *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3-4a.

²⁴ Again quoting *Śikṣāpatra* 18.3b and then 4a.

remember the Lord and contemplate [Him]. This has been explained to us. In our own homes, look, how do we behave? [We think,] “This person has understanding and this person is ignorant.” We have respect for those with understanding and not towards the ignorant. But sometimes it happens that a person without understanding feels great affinity to us, (more than*) a wise person, and then we overlook the conduct of that person [with whom we have close affinity].

Ācārya explains to us that, so what if we lack wisdom? But because we lack wisdom, because we have the intelligence of an embodied being, Bhagavān will not mess up our practical lives. The distinctiveness of the Lord’s conduct is being described here. And along with that [Harirāyajī] is explaining to us that those who have some knowledge of the relationship with Bhagavān, even in the worldly condition, in separation from the Lord, having full knowledge, will feel the force of Bhagavān: “*sarvatra kleśabhāvanāt.*”²⁵ He has explained something here. That where there are souls not connected to Bhagavān’s līlā, that entire creation is devoid of bliss. [The bhakta] will naturally remember this (*) and from that she will also feel the force of Bhagavān. She has seen this. That when the bhakta prayed to Bhagavān—she understood Bhagavān’s form. She understood that Bhagavān didn’t consider anyone’s faults in His mind. Śrī Gusāñjī too, prayed,²⁶ “Lord, if you [look] in the direction of [and] contemplate my faults, then you will be troubled.”

The person who utters such a thing, that the Lord will be troubled by one’s impurities, has an intimate relationship [with the Lord]. “From my impurities, my suffering, my comments, my mistakes, He will suffer”—this person has experienced soul dedication. The false world has been set aside, forgotten. It’s not that Bhagavān is ignorant. Nor is it [simply to say] “Don’t look

²⁵ Quoting *Śikṣāpatra* 18.5a.

²⁶ Referring I believe to the letters Śrī Gusāñjī wrote to Kṛṣṇa, collected in a work called *Vijñapti*.

at my faults.” [It’s that,] “You will be troubled.” He is so powerful, that just as fire burns all impurities and reduces everything to a single essence, He is all forms, and anything that comes near Him will automatically undergo [that purification]. “[But,] if You consider [my faults] You will feel distress. And if You feel distress, I could not bear that fault. The result/punishment of faults [on the other hand,] I can withstand.” What deep intimacy! We all know how to transgress, but when we receive the fruit of those transgressions, we complain, “Why? Why is this happening?” People should think about that at the time of the action, but they don’t!

So, [even if] you don’t contemplate the Lord through this intelligence, but just through intimacy, “*yaiḥ kṛṣṇasātkṛtprāṇa*”—these words. Establish your life-force with Him. Then one should understand, “*teṣāṃ kā paridevanā*” [what afflictions could they have?]—then see, does anxiety disturb you, or does that reflection arise out of it. Don’t think about it beforehand.

Ācārya explained a very deep thing to us. If we learn to contemplate at that time [of anxiety] too, with faith—even if we read [*pāṭh*] sacred texts, but Harirāyajī explains one simple thing to us: after reading sacred texts, contemplate. And strive to experience that intimacy. So what if those people say, “It’s just an act.” Even in a drama, only if some realistic intelligence comes [to the actor] can he perform a certain dramatic sentiment (*bhāva*). And if that performance settles within, then one day it can become a reality. There is no reason to be disturbed by this [doubt].

They say that (*after) Bhagavān’s bhaktas [the Gopīs], from His līlā creation there is never any experience of bliss.²⁷ So understand this, that Bhagavān has established His bliss only in His līlā creation. In the rest of the world [*] is found everywhere in all places.²⁸ Therefore

²⁷ A difficult passage, in which I am not clear whether I have chosen the correct word with *vyatit* (past), but *vyathit* (bothered, stricken) did not seem a good fit either.

²⁸ A garbled word in the recording here has made the meaning unclear to me.

instead of placing the illusions of the world in one's heart, the best thing to do is forget about illusion and establish Bhagavān in one's inner being.

[Harirājajī] has explained one more thing about removing anxiety: instead of contemplating the world, for the removal of anxiety (*establish) contemplation of intimacy with Bhagavān. In the same way that you establish the world and illusion within by reflecting on the world, from feeling anxiety in the world, from attaching intimacy to the world, [from thinking] “This is mine, that is mine,” you establish everything inside yourself—in that same way, establish the Lord within your inner being, and remove illusion. If you establish the Lord in your inner being, then you will not be deserted; you will remain his. But we will attain freedom from the pains of the false world, and be able to (*lead) a life that is balanced, with beautiful equal-mindedness. This is what Harirājajī has explained to us.

भगवत सेवा उपयोगी जीवन बिताने वाले भगवत भक्त को चिंता नहीं होती है और उसका आचार्यचरणों में संपूर्ण विश्वास होता है. इसलिए वह विश्वास ही उस के जीवन के चिंता की निवृत्ति का कारण बनता है. यह बात समझाने के साथ ही हमको आचार्य की वाणी का विशेष प्रकार से चिंतन करने का निर्देश श्री हरिरायजी {करते हैं}. यह विशेष प्रकार का चिंतन क्या है कि आचार्यचरणों की वाणी की भाव विचार करके और भगवान अपने भक्तों को चिंता मुक्त करते हैं—इस प्रकार की भगवत-लीला का चिंतन करके—और वह अपने मन को और बुद्धि को समझा. नवरत्न में आचार्य ने “चिंता कापि न कार्या निवेदितात्मभिः” यह शब्द कहा. देखो, जीवन के बारे में सोचोगे, अपने बारे में सोचोगे, परिवार के विषय में सोचोगे. इतनी ही बातों में अगर सोचोगे, परंतु एक बात और सोच के देखो, कि “मैं निवेदितात्मा हूँ. मैं ने प्रभु के समक्ष आत्मनिवेदन किया है, समर्पण किया है. और स्नेह से किया”.

‘स्नेह से किया है,’ यह कहने के तात्पर्य क्या है?. दुनिया में समर्पण की जहाँ तक बात है. कितने ही प्रकार कितने ही भाव से हम लोग समर्पित हो जाते हैं किसी की. मगर यहाँ, इस समर्पण का उल्लेख “समर्पितात्मभिः” {निवेदितात्मभिः} शब्द से कहते, देखो, वह समर्पितात्मा है.

किसी महात्मा से, स्वार्थ से, या अन्य बात से समर्पित नहीं होता, उसका समर्पण सहज स्नेह से हुआ है. सहज स्नेह के समर्पण की विशेषता बतायी, कि वह इतने समर्थ प्रभु का आश्रय ले करके उनको समर्पित होता. और फिर भी प्रभु से याचन नहीं करता प्रभु के सुख की प्रार्थना करता है भावना करता है उस के लिये कार्या {करता है}.

औरे यह कहा कि “निवेदीतात्मभिः” में आत्मनिवेदित हूँ इसमें बड़े प्रसन्नता हूँ. भगवान के साथ आत्मीय संबन्ध स्थापित करके आत्मीयता का अनुभाव करके, और एक प्रकार से उस के जीवन में निश्चिंतता आती है. इस निश्चिंतता का अनुभाव वल्लभाचार्य ने स्वयं किया और उस अनुभाव के आनन्द के (विवेक*)[3:50] की सदानंद के साथ वही शब्द लिख सके, कि “चिंता कापि न कार्या निवेदितात्मभिः.” हम कोग निवेदित आत्मा हैं हमारे जीवन में कभी भी चिन्ता की आवश्यकता नहीं है. इस बात पर भरोसा रखो कि भगवान अनुग्रहमारगीय हैं. भगवान अनुग्रह करते हैं पुष्टि से. वह जीवन में हमें लौकिक गति प्रदान नहीं करेंगे. यह आत्मविश्वास और “निवेदितात्मभिः” शब्द कहा.

आत्मनिवेदन को मुख्या बतला करके एक बात और कही कि भगवान के साथ लोग की भांती देहसम्बन्ध नहीं है यह आत्मसम्बन्ध है. देहसम्बन्धों में चिंता हो सकती है, आत्मसम्बन्ध में चिंता नहीं है. और आत्मसम्बन्ध टूटा भी नहीं करते बिखरा भी नहीं करते. उन में असंतोष क्लेश कुछ नहीं होता. और इसलिए उन्होंने बहोत बड़ा संबल²⁹ प्रदान किया, हलनमन{*}³⁰ प्रदान किया. हरिरायचरण यही बात करते कि सब बात सोचते हो देह के सम्बंध के बारे में. दुनिया भर की बातें दुनिया भर की बातें सोचते हो. कम से कम अपने आचार्य के एक महत्वपूर्ण वाक्य तो सोच करके देखो. वह श्रीमहाप्राभु के वाक्य का विशेष प्रकार से चिंतन करके तो देखो, कि “चिंता कापी न कार्या.” चिंता से मुक्त होना अगर सीख गए, चिंतन करना सीख गए, {तब} इस नवरत्न की भावना को जीवन में स्थान देना सीख गए. तो वस्तुतः बहोत सी समस्याओं में विचलित हुए बिना दृढ़ता से भगवत कार्या कर सकोगे. दृढ़ता से भगवत कार्या करने के लिये निश्चिंत जीवन बिताना—यह लक्ष एक और है. और केवल लोक में निश्चिंत जीवन बिताना, इसका लक्ष कुछ और है.

²⁹ *sambala* = support, provisions (OHED, 967)

³⁰ I am unsure of the word spoken here (at 5:15 into the recording). It could be related to *hal* [Arabic], m. “solution” (OHED, 1063).

स्वामी और सेवक का आत्मीय सम्बन्ध बतलाते हुए श्री हरिरायजी ने पेहले बताया कि यदि अपने स्वजन को अगर चिंता होती है प्रभु उसका मुख देखते तो उनको लगता है उसको क्या कह सकूं. यह कष्ट—भगवान को श्रम न दे जाए, हमारे जीवन का इसका ध्यान रखने वाला व्यक्ति, वह निवेदितात्मा जीव है, कि जिसने श्रीमहाप्रभु के वाक्यों पर अधिक विचार किया है, लोग सी चिड़चिड़ी बातों पर विचार नहीं किया. यह बात कहने का तात्पर्य क्या है? किसी भी प्रकार का हमारे साथ व्यवहार क्यों न हो जाए, हम उसकी चिंता न करें हम महाप्रभु की वाणी का चिंतन करें. और बार बार अपने हृदय में चिंतन करने से, चिंतन का प्रभाव, विचार का प्रभाव क्या होता है, यह विश्लेषण आपके समक्ष पहले प्रस्तुत किया. वेह अगर इस प्रकार का यह प्रभाव हमारे जीवन में आ जाएगा, तो हमारे जीवन में सहज एक निश्चिंतता की वृत्ति उदय हो जाएगी. बहुत से बहुत बड़ी घटना {बीती हुई*} हमको हिला नहीं पाएगी.

भागवत-आश्रय में रहने वाले भगवान के साथ रहने वाले लोग भागवत लीला का जब हम चिंतन करते हैं देखते हैं, तो विपत्ति आने पर उपाय खोजते हैं विचलित नहीं होते. विचलित नहीं होते कारण के उनको अपने प्रभु पर पूर्ण भरोसा {हैं}.

यह बात दशमस्कंध के भागवत्लीला के प्रखंड में हम देख सकते हैं. आदमी में जब अगर भगदार जाए तो बुद्धि अवीभ्रम हो सकता है. वैसे बालक है. बालक के साथ खेलते है तो थोड़ी भगदार तो बचना स्वाभाविक है. मगर इस भगदार में भी उपाय खोजते हैं, विचलित नहीं हो जाते हैं. यह बात. और वह उपाय ऐसे खोजते हैं, यह समझ करके उनके मन में प्रभु के प्रति विश्वास.

इसी प्रकार हम को भी महाप्रभु की वाणी में विश्वास होना चाहिए कि “विचिंत्यताम्” उसका विशेष चिंतन करके देखो. मन को बुद्धि को इस के लिए तैयार करो. कहते कि बात तो ठीक है. परंतु यह आत्मनिवेदन का स्मरण हमको हो जाए – यद्यपि स्मरण करना चाहिए, यह आचार्य ने कहा – परंतु यह स्मरण आत्मनिवेदन का हो जाए यह सहज साधन नहीं. लोक का स्मरण हो जातेगा हमको. अन्य बातों का स्मरण हो जाएगा. एक छोटी सी घटना या कोई व्यवहार हमारे प्रति कर देगा उसका स्मरण रहेगा. परंतु आत्मनिवेदन का स्मरण नहीं रहता है, ऐसी स्थिति में यह कैसे मान लीया जाए कि “निवेदितात्मभिः” यह शब्द जो कहा यह ठीक है.

भले ही हम ने निवेदन किया हो, वाचिक, मगर हम उस बात की गहराई तक पहुँच नहीं पाए. हम उसको जानते नहीं हैं.

इस शंका का समाधान आचार्या की ही वाणी में श्रीहरिराय [करता है*]: “अज्ञानिनो ज्ञानिनश्च यदि स्यात् समता कृतौ.” यहाँ कहते कि चाहे कितना ही ज्ञानी हो चाहे कितना ही अज्ञानी हो. यह दोनों ही इस विषय में सामान हैं. यह हमारे जानकारी हो या न हो. परंतु यदि हम ने आत्मनिवेदन किया है अज्ञान से अथवा ज्ञान से, तो वस्तुतः अज्ञानी है तब भी भगवान के लिए कुछ फ़र्क नहीं पड़ेगा (अंतर नहीं){*}[11:25]. भगवान के सामने निवेदन करने वाले में दोनों ही एक समान माने जाएंगे. भगवान इस बात को नहीं देखते कि इसने सोच-समझ के किया है इस {*}[11:40] अनजाने में कर दिया है यह जानते नहीं आत्मनिवेदन हुआ है. इसलिए, यह बात क्यों कही? इसलिए कही कि हम अपने जीवन में कहने को तो आत्मनिवेदन कर दिया. पर हमारे अंतःकरण की वृत्तियाँ उस आत्मनिवेदन को स्वीकार हृदय से कर नहीं पाती. लोक निवेदित है हम, आत्मनिवेदित नहीं. लोक निवेदित है इसलिए बार बार लोक में घुसता है मन और लौकिक दृष्टि से ही हमारा मन चिंतन चिंतन [sic] करता है. अलौकिक दृष्टि से चिंतन करने का प्रकार उसको नहीं आया.

अगर नहीं आया तो क्या करें? उनका, इसकी कोई चिंता करने की आवश्यकता नहीं. भगवान का यह सहज स्वभाव है कि किसी जीव को निश्चिंत बनाते हैं. इस विधि को समझने की आवश्यकता है. कहते समझे कैसे? कि “विचिंत्यताम्.” जैसे लोक का चिंतन करते हो, लोकोन्मुखी हो करके थोड़ा भगवत...{*cough}...करके भगवान का इस प्रकार का चिंतन करो. प्रयास करो अपने मन को समझाने कि “मैं निवेदितात्मा हूँ.” उसके महत्व को समझो.

जो लोग इसके महत्व को नहीं समझते उनकी भी चिंता निवारण भगवान [करते हैं]. बहोत से लोगों ने प्रभु के महत्व को नहीं जाना. मगर प्रभु की शरण गए अथवा प्रभु का नाम लिया प्रभु ने उनकी चिंता निवृत्ति की उनका उद्धार किया. इसलिए यहाँ हमको यह समझाते हैं कि देखो, भगवान किसी को निश्चिंत करता है तो अपने महात्म्य से करता है अपने गुणों से करता है. उसके दुर्गुण देख करके विचार नहीं करता है. यह भगवान की महत्ता है.

भगवान की महत्ता समझाते हुए एक बात हमको और समझाये आचार्य ने. कि भगवान जैसे जीव के अपराध को नहीं देखते या दुर्गुणों को नहीं देखते जब कृपा करते हैं, इसी प्रकार हमें

किसी के अपराध या दुर्गुणों का चिंतन नहीं [करना है]। अगर चिंतन करना है तो तो “निवेदितात्मभिः” इस का [चिंतन] करो कि आत्मनिवेदित व्यक्ति (का क्या कहा){*}. वस्तुतः एक बहुत गहरी बात है कि जो व्यक्ति एक समर्पित जीवन करके और सारे दुनिया का कार्या कर जाए प्रभु-सेवा मान करके प्रभु-सेवा करते हुए. और इस प्रकार का वह स्मरण कर सके, तो लोक में निवेदन का क्या स्मरण करना है? वैसे तो हम अपने हर एक व्यक्ति के प्रति लोक में स्वार्थ के कारण समर्पित. (उनका){*} [15:06] देखो. भगवान जब भक्त को चाहता है तो स्वार्थ के कारण नहीं चाहता. ऐसी ही थोड़ा निस्वार्थ भाव से आत्मनिवेदन करना तो सीख लो. यह बात अगर हम समझेंगे तो लोक में हर एक कार्य हमारे स्वार्थ पर अपने...{unfinished sentence*}[15:30]. यह बहुत बड़ी बात है कि हर बात को स्वार्थ की दृष्टि से सोच के लोक में करना अगर यह हम छोड़ दे, तो बहुत सुखी हो जाएं. और यह किसलिए ऐसे करना चाहिए? कि हम समर्पितात्मा है यह स्मरण कर सकें.

साथ ही, जीवन में हमारे पास उतने साधन भी नहीं है. साधन के अभाव में जीवन में हमको वह क्या फल मिल सकेगा? क्यों? उन्ही साधन का अभाव है तो ज्ञान से क्या फल मिलेगा? स्पष्ट बात है. कि यहाँ जीव के पास ज्ञानात्मक साधन है अथवा नहीं है. वह प्रभु को समर्पित करता है अपना जीवन, प्रभु इसी पर विचार करते हैं और किसी बात पर सोचते नहीं. अगर अज्ञान से आत्मनिवेदन किया है तभी श्रीमद् भागवत में एक बात कही गयी “अज्ञानादथवा ज्ञानादुत्तमश्लोकनाम यत्.” भगवान का नाम ज्ञान से अथवा अज्ञान से (ले पाए){*}[17:15]. नाम के साथ क्या महत्ता है कि उनका स्वरूप का स्मरण होता है. उनकी विशेषताओं का स्मरण होता है. जैसे हम किसी अपने व्यक्ति का नाम लेते तो उसका स्वरूप भी तो मालूम रहता. उसकी विशेषता मालूम रहती.

ऐसे भगवान के सम्यक कीर्तन करने वाले जो लोग हैं, उनके समस्त पापों को भगवान दूर कर देंगे. जैसे सारे विकारों को अग्नि जला देता है. इसलिए जिन्होंने अज्ञान से अथवा ज्ञान से भगवान को आत्मनिवेदन किया है, उनके जीवन में दुःख का स्पर्श नहीं होता. यह एक आत्मनिवेदन की बात हमको समझाने के लिए पंक्ति कही. क्यों नहीं होता उनको स्पर्श दुःख का? इसलिए कि उनके मन में दृढ़ विश्वास है. जिस के अन्तर में जितनी दृढ़ता होगी उतनी दुःख उसको कम स्पर्श करेगा. जितना शारीर स्वस्थ होगा उतना रोग की ठिकाना कम लगी. इसलिए—और सुख दुःख मन से सम्बंधित हैं—इन बातों को विचार करके कहते कि देखो, अगर

ज्ञान से कोई आत्मनिवेदन करता है उसकी स्थिति में थोड़ा बहुत (भले ही*)[18:50] अन्तर आ जाएगा. जैसे आचार्य ने कहा कि “ज्ञानस्चेद भजते कृष्णस्तस्मान नास्त्यादी...*[19:00]. जानी व्यक्ति अगर प्रभु का भजन करता उससे अधिक तो और कोई बात ही नहीं.

मगर भले ही न करे ज्ञान. प्रभु का प्रेम से स्मरण करने वाले वह पशु भी, वृन्दावन के, वह धन्य हो गए. भगवान को और कुछ न दे सके तो प्रेम की दृष्टि से देख ही (प्रिय बने*) [19:30]. यह देखने की बात है, कि पशुओं का भी प्रेम भगवान में जागृत हो गया. प्रभु के स्वरूप का बोध अथवा प्रभु का इतना सुन्दर आकर्षण उन पशुओं के प्रति प्रेम उन्होंने...[short tape skip] उनमें भी एक (निश्चल)[19:45] जागृत किया. हमने उस स्वरूप का चिंतन कभी नहीं किया. पशुवत जीवन का चिंतन कर लिया. ऐसा जीवन ज़रूर बना लिया. मगर वह चीज़ हमारे अंतःकरण में उत्पन्न न कर सके कि भगवान का दर्शन करते ही उनको प्रेम उत्पन्न हो गया. क्यों? कि प्रभु का उनके प्रति अनुराग था और उनका प्रभु के प्रति अनुराग ये दोनों ही प्रेम की भाषा दोनों ने समझ ली. अब वहाँ अज्ञान से है कि किसी प्रकार से है प्रभु के प्रति आकर्षण उनको पैदा हुआ. और अपना मान करके हुआ. नहीं तो भड़क जाते. सीधी बात है.

इसी प्रकार वह पशु प्रभु को इतना देख करके भी जानते हैं (*विवशता) [21:00] प्रभु हम कुछ नहीं दे सकते हैं. जिन पशुओं ने प्रभु के दर्शन किये उनके जीवन में भी भागवत धर्म उदय हो गया. भगवान के दर्शन के काल में अथवा उनके वेणु नाद के श्रवण के काल में, उन्होंने अपने देह-धर्म छोड़ दिया. वस्तुतः उस नाद का सुन्दर चिंतन करके, श्रवण करके, उन पर भी प्रभाव पड़ा. उन पशुओं को भी भगवान से आत्मीयता का अनुभाव हुआ.

यह बात हमको समझाते कैसे है? यह देखो. अगर समार्पितात्मा हो और प्रभु से आत्मनिवेदन का अनुभाव करोगे, आत्मीयता का अनुभाव करोगे, तो लोक संबंधी जो क्लेश है जो देह संबंधी, देह को आप आत्मा मान करके जो सम्बन्ध स्थापित करे उनका क्लेश (नहीं होगा*). यह दैहिक और लौकिक क्लेशों से ऊपर उठने का एक प्रकार बताया इससे. जो लोग इस से थोड़ा ऊपर उठ करके अपने जीवन में विचार कर सकते हैं वाही व्यक्ति अपने जीवन में सही दिशा में पद रख सकते हैं, कदम बढ़ा सकते हैं, उन्नति कर सकते हैं. इसलिए उन्होंने कहा कि यदि कोई ज्ञानमार्गीय है, इन संबंधों को देख करके समझ जाएगा—ज्ञान से अगर आत्मनिवेदन करेगा तो. यह जो मैं ने लोक के प्रति समर्पण किया है, इनके व्यवहार में और प्रभु के व्यवहार

में कितना अन्तर है. वह, जो प्रभु की लीला संबंधी वास्तु नहीं है, उस में लोक भावना प्रपंच देखेगा, समझ जाएगा कि यह (है) प्रपंच. और प्रपंच जब समझेगा तो उसके मन में अपने आप यह दुःख होगा एक विरह पैदा होगा उस में यहाँ प्रभु की तत्कास नहीं. देखिये. और इसलिए वह भगवान के चिंतन में तत्पर हो जाएगा (नहीं दुनिया*)[23:35] मेरे प्रभु का, यानी वह नहीं. यह ज्ञान है प्रेम मूलक.

भागवत सम्बन्ध जब में है अगर यह देखेगा तभी वहाँ भगवान की स्फूर्ति होगी और जहाँ भगवान का सम्बन्ध नहीं है दूसरी बात देखेगा तभी यह स्फूर्ति होगी कि देखो—यहाँ इन को प्रभु का सम्बन्ध का बोध नहीं इसलिए इस प्रकार का कार्य कराया (यह है) प्रपंच. चाहे वह अपनी घरवाली ही क्यों न हो. जिनको भगवद-धर्म और भगवद-सम्बन्ध का बोध नहीं है, (*करियाली)[24:15] स्वजनों को धार्मिक आदर्श को स्वीकार अंतःकरण से नहीं कर पाते, तो उस को (*दबोसला) कह सकते हैं और कुछ बात कह सकेंगे मगर उसकी विशेषता समझने की चेष्टा नहीं करेंगे. इन बातों से हमको विचलित नहीं. न उनके (वहास/बहास) {*}[24:40] का प्रभाव हमारे ऊपर पड़ना चाहिए क्यों जिनके देहसंबंध में थोड़ा सा सुख का अन्तर आएगा हमारे कारण से उसको चिलाएंगे. वह देहसम्बन्ध के विषय में चिलाना जानते हैं और कुछ नहीं जानते, यह है हमारे लोक सम्बन्ध. यह ठीक है कि हमारे द्वारा उनको कष्ट न हो, यह भगवदीय ध्यान रखता है. अपने द्वारा जब प्रभु को श्रम नहीं देता दुसरे को क्यों देता. मगर उन लोगों को हमेशा जैसे प्रपंच की स्फूर्ति होती है, उस प्रपंच की स्फूर्ति को ज्ञानी व्यक्ति समझ लेगा. इनका विचार और इनके चिंतन के स्थर इससे आगे है. इसलिए यहाँ उनका भागवत सम्बन्ध नहीं है केवल लोक सम्बन्ध से बिलबिला³¹ रहे हैं. यह बात समझ करके उसको यह ध्यान होगा अगर यह प्रभु का चिंतन होता और इनका यह स्मरण होता तो ये कितने सुखी (होते). इसका मतलब यह नहीं है के उनको उपदेश देता है. प्रपंचक में अगर भगवान नहीं हैं, तो वहाँ, [*यानी/जाने] को भगवान का विरह पैदा हो जाएगा जिस प्रकार ब्रजभक्तों को भगवान अन्तस्थ होने पर भगवान का विरह पैदा हो गया. वह भागवत चिंतन करेंगे उस समय भी प्रपंच चिंतन नहीं करेंगे.

तात्पर्य यह क्या है कि ऐसी स्थिति में भी लोक दृष्टि से हम को अपने स्वजन या परिजन उनके आचारण और उनके विचारों का चिंतन नहीं करना है. लोक की बात उनकी है वह

³¹ *bilbilānā*: to be restless, feel pain; to complain (OHED, 735)

लोक तक सीमित है. इस चिंतन को भीतर तक नहीं ले जाना है. यह बात हमारे लिए व्यवहार में बहुत उपयोगी है. भागवत-भाव स्थिर हो जाए तो कुछ (कहने है क्या). इस से भागवत भाव तो स्थिर होता नहीं है. दुःख यह हो जाता है, कि “ऐसे क्यों, ऐसे क्यों?” ऐसे प्रकार यह दुःख हो जावे अगर भागवत भाव स्थिर नहीं (हुआ). ज्ञान से अगर आत्मनिवेदन है तो भागवत भाव स्थिर हो जाएगा. अज्ञान से भी हुआ तो प्रभु का स्मरण आएगा. वहाँ और प्रकार की चिंता करने की अवश्यता नहीं.

अगर लोक व्यवहार का हम ने किसी का चिंतन किया तो हम स्वयं (*उर्ध्वमुख/विमुख) [27:18] होता. इसलिए यहाँ हमको आचार्य ने एक बात बतायी कि चाहे हमको यह स्मरण है कि नहीं कि हम निवेदितात्मा है. इस स्मरण की बात नहीं है, हम ने निवेदन किया है. इसका दृष्टांत दे दिया, कि जान करके अग्नि का स्पर्श करो या अनजान में करो हाथ जल जाएगा. इसी प्रकार अज्ञान से भी आत्मनिवेदन किया है तभी भगवान अज्ञानी और ज्ञानी के फल में भेद नहीं करेंगे. वह तो यही मानेंगे कि मेरा है. यह बहुत बड़ी बात है. एक दृष्टिकोण इतना अच्छा दिया, कि प्रभु की दृष्टि में अन्तर नहीं आएगा. चाहे वह बेसमझदर है या समझदार है जैसा भी अपना है. यह जब भगवान सोच लेते हैं, अथवा जिस व्यक्ति ने यह सोचा है, कि मैं प्रभु का हूँ, ऐसा अन्तर से अनुभाव करने की चेष्टा की, यह बात आचार्य ने हमको [समझायी].

हरिरायजी कहते हैं कि महाप्रभु इस वाणी कि, ‘हम कैसे जाने, हम कैसे जाने’ यह जब हम पूछते हैं न, एक बात से श्रीहरिरायजी हमको थोड़ा (*विवेकते हैं)[28:47], कि देखो. उसकी अवशाकता नहीं. “अज्ञानिनो ज्ञानिनश्च यदि स्यात् समता कृतौ” अगर इनके दोनों की समता कर लो, “तदा तु साधनाभावात् किं वृत्तं ज्ञाननः फलम्”. इसलिए जिसने अज्ञान से अथवा ज्ञान से आत्मनिवेदन किया है आचार्य ने कहा कि “यैः कृष्णसात्कृतप्राण”³² यही, इस शब्द पर विचार करना “यैः कृष्णसात्” जिसने भगवान के साथ, जो कृतप्राण हो गया “तेषां का परिदेवना” उनको और कष्ट क्या बाधा कर सकता है. इसलिए भगवान जो उत्तमश्लोक हैं यह “उत्तमश्लोक” शब्द का आर्थ क्या है “इतने यश वाले.” अगर चिंतन करना है तो भागवत यश का चिंतन करो. अगर जीवन में समझना है तो उनकी विशेषताओं को समझाने की चेष्टा करो. लोगों के गुणों और दुर्गुणों इनके चिंतन करने की अवश्यता नहीं है.

³² *yaiḥ kṛṣṇasātkṛtaprāṇaisteṣāṃ kā paridevanā / Navaratna 4b*

यदि हम इस प्रकार के वचन की भावना मन में रख करने लगेंगे, तो यहाँ एक बात है, कि भगवान हमारे सकल दोष दूर कर देंगे. इसलिए जिन लोगों ने भगवान के प्रति समर्पण किया है, उनको चिंता नहीं करके और प्रभु का स्मरण करना उचित है, चिंतन करना उचित है. यह बात हम को समझायी. हम लोग अपने घर में देखीये कैसा व्यवहार कर जाते हैं, यह समझदार है और यह बेसमझदार है. समझदार के प्रति हमारा आदर हो जाता है, बेसमझदार के प्रति आदर नहीं होता, मगर कभी कभी बिना समझदार व्यक्ति में भी अपने प्रति आत्मीयता बहोत होती है समझदार के (तुलने में)[31:00]. अब वहाँ हम उपेक्षा कर जाते हैं ये लोग व्यवहार का.

आचार्य हम को यह समझाते हैं कि भले ही हम अज्ञानी. मगर अज्ञानी होने के कारण, जीव बुद्धि होने के कारण, भगवान हमारे व्यवहार में ऐसे गड़बर नहीं करेंगे (कार्या से)[31:20]. प्रभु के व्यवहार की विशिष्टता बतला रहे हैं. और इस के साथ ही हम को यह समझाते हैं, कि जो लोग, जिनको भागवत सम्बन्ध का कुछ ज्ञान है, तो भगवान के विरह में उनको सर्वज्ञ इस प्रपंच में भी भगवान की स्फूर्ति होगी, “सर्वत्र क्लेशभावनात्.”³³ एक बात यह उन्होंने बतायी. कि जहाँ प्रभु की लीला से सम्बंधित जीव नहीं है, वह सारे ही सृष्टि नीरानंदमयी है. इस बात का वह सहज स्मरण कर लेंगे(*). और इससे उनको भी भगवान की स्फूर्ति हो जाएगी. इसलिए, यह देखा. (कि भगवान) कि भक्तों ने जब भगवान की प्रार्थना की, अब भगवान के स्वरूप को समझा. तो यह समझ लिया कि भगवान किसी के अवगुण को अपने मन में नहीं आया. श्रीगुसाईंजी ने भी जब प्रार्थना किया, प्रभु मेरे दोषों के तरफ अगर आप चिंतन करोगे तो आप व्यथित हो जाओगे.

अपने दोषों से प्रभु व्यथित हो जाएगा यह बात जो अपने मुंह से निकालता उस का आत्मीय सम्बन्ध (*है). “मेरे दोष से मेरे दुःख से मेरी बात से मेरी गलती से वह दुःखी हो जाएगा” यह [व्यक्ति] आत्मसम्बंध का अनुभाव किया. यह प्रपंच की स्फूर्ति हट गयी विस्मृति हो गयी. भगवान अज्ञानी हैं यह बात नहीं है. अपने दोष हैं उनको मत देखो, यह भी बात नहीं है. आप श्रमित हो जाओगे [यह बात है]. आप में इतनी सामर्थ्य है कि जैसे अग्नि सारे दोषों को भस्म कर देता है एक तत्त्व होके आप तो सर्व रूप आप के पास तो अपने आप यह क्रीया हो

³³ Śikṣāpatra 18.5a.

जाएगा. आप चिंतन करोगे तो आपको व्यथा होगी. और यदि आपको व्यथा होगी तो वह दोष हम सहन नहीं कर सकेंगे. दोष के दंडा हम सहन कर लेंगे. यह कितनी बड़ी आत्मीयता है. हम लोग दोष करना जानते हैं दोष का दंडा जब मिलता है तो बिलबिलाते हैं, “ऐसे क्यों ऐसे क्यों.” यह तो करते समय सोचना चाहिए मनुष्य मगर नहीं करते.

इसलिए इस बुद्धि से भी प्रभु का चिंतन न करें, केवल आत्मीयता से “यैः कृष्णसात्कृतप्राण” ये शब्द. इनके साथ कृतप्राण करो. तब समझना कि “तेषां का परिदेवना” फिर देखना कि चिंता व्यथित करती है या चिंतन जो है इस से निकाल देता है. पहले विचार मत करो. एक बहुत बड़ी गंभीर बात आचार्य ने हमको समझायी. उस समय भी यह विश्वास से चिंतन हम करना सीखें यद्यपि हम पाठ करते हैं, मगर एक हरिरायजी सहज बात हमको समझाते कि पाठ करने के बाद चिंतन करो. और इस आत्मीयता का अनुभाव करने की चेष्टा करो. भले ही कहते उन लोग कि नाटक है, तो नाटक में भी कुछ यथार्थ बुद्धि आएगी तब न वह उसका भाव का प्रदर्शन कर सकेगा ऐसा अभिनय जो होगा भीतर बैठेगा तो कभी यथार्थ बन जाएगा. इस बात से गबड़ाने की आवश्यकता नहीं है.

कहते कि ऐसे भागवत भक्तों को केवल जो है भगवान की लीला सृष्टि का (*व्यतित)[35:40] कहीं आनंद का अनुभाव नहीं होता. इसलिए यह समझ लो, भगवान की जो लीला सृष्टि है वही भगवान ने अपना आनंद स्थापित किया है. बाकी लोक के [*35:55] तो सर्वत्र सब जगह मिलेंगे. इसलिए लोक के प्रपंच को हृदय में बिठाने के अपेक्षा उत्तम यह है कि प्रपंच की विस्मृति करके भगवान को अंतःकरण में स्थापित {करना}.

यह एक चिंता कि निवृत्ति की और भी बात हमको उन्होंने समझायी. कि लोक चिंतन के अपेक्षा चिंता की निवृत्ति में आत्मीयता का चिंतन भगवान के साथ ही [*स्थापित][36:25]. और लोक चिंतन से लोक चिंता से लोक में आत्मीयता लगाने से जो जैसे लोक को अन्दर स्थापित कर लेते हो और प्रपंच को, कि “मेरा वह है, यह मेरा वह है” सब को अपने भीतर स्थापित करते हो. इसी प्रकार यह प्रभु को अंतःकरण में स्थापित करो, प्रपंच को निकालो. अगर अंतःकरण में प्रभु को स्थापित कर लिया तो अपने विराने नहीं हो जाएंगे. वह अपने ही रहेंगे. मगर प्रपंच की पीड़ा से हम निवृत्ति प्राप्त कर लेंगे. और एक सुन्दर सामान बुद्धि वाला संतुलित जीवन (*व्यतित) कर सकेंगे, यह श्रीहरिरायजी ने हमको बतलाये.

Vacanāmṛt (B):

Excerpts from Prathameśjī lecture, “Śikṣāpatra no.1 (side A)”

[Invocation:] Salutations to the revered guru.

The aim of life for the Lord’s bhakta is not limited to living only for oneself or working only to fill one’s own stomach.¹ That’s why the bhakta who dedicates her life to the Lord’s service (*sevā*) and the service of the dharma (spirituality) makes an effort in life that, “In my life, [may there] be in place of the force of illusion, the force of divine play (*līlā*) instead.” What’s the point of saying this? We always sit around thinking about the illusory world; its power is [then] felt. That is how we have grown accustomed [to thinking]. When our life practice (*abhyās*) has become like that, then we’ve foolishly forgotten² our life’s goal and lost our life’s resolve. On top of that, a deficiency—a decrease has happened in our refuge in our divine teacher (*Prabhu Ācārya*), who is supreme. And we’ve started thinking that life is [about] living just to eat and drink.

People who live like that do not [attain the] ideal in life. Just like in Western culture they made this aim in life: “*khāo, pīyo, mauj karo*—eat, drink, and be merry!” Whereas they had this goal in life, even if that goal appeared to give pleasure, actually it did not (*) give them peace. Discord (*aśānti*) in life has been [the result] for people who have that kind of aim... And they have started doing ill-considered, indiscriminate things. When this kind of life-disposition is developed, then a person lives just for totally selfish purposes.

While explaining that situation to us, Ācārya tells us that “*kālah svakāryam kurute na jānāti jano yataḥ*” [*Śikṣāpatra* 18.1a]. In life, time is doing its own thing. We don’t recognize (*)

¹ Prathameśjī is surely referencing here *Śikṣāpatra* 18.2.

² I have used “foolishly” to render the disapproving sense of *baīṭhnā* when used as a V2 compound verb.

the situation, the work that time is doing. If we were to fully recognize this, then the situation would not arise in our minds that [makes us] negligent (*pramāda*) in divine duties. **And [yet] we stay so wrapped up (*vihval*) in our own activities, always thinking “What to do? How to proceed? What will happen?” In this way, the effect of exclusively selfish reflection has befallen us.** And that’s why, clearly, we become lax in our personal spirituality (*svadharmā*). We don’t get lazy about our own work; we don’t feel exhausted doing [our own work]. And even if we do, becoming powerless [to desist], we will (*) keep at it. In our worldly [affairs], in our own life, we will withstand [difficulties]. But we haven’t learned to withstand [difficulties when it comes to] *sevā*. There is one thing to be understood from this: Everyone withstands [difficulties when it’s] for themselves. But [no one] lives **withstanding [difficulties] for the sake of others, or to bring others happiness—that is a true life.** When we live for our own purposes [*svārth*] alone, for the pleasure of our senses, then we don’t realize that this time is diminishing our lifespan.

श्री श्री गुरवे नमः. भागवत्भक्त के जीवन का लक्ष अपने आप में केवल अपने ही लिए जीना अपने पेट भरने के लिए ही सब काम करना इतने तक सीमित नहीं है. इसलिए भागवत्भक्त जो अपने जीवन को प्रभु सेवा में धर्म सेवा में समर्पित करता है, उसके जीवन में वह एक प्रयत्न करता है कि हमारे जीवन में प्रपंच की स्फूर्ति के अपेक्षा लीला की स्फूर्ति होती. कहने के तात्पर्य क्या है? हम लोग बैठे बैठे हमेशा प्रपंच (*सोचा) करते हैं. उसकी स्फूर्ति होती है अपना ऐसा अभ्यास हो गया. जहाँ इस प्रकार के हमारे जीवन में अभ्यास हुआ, वहाँ हम अपने जीवन के लक्ष को भुला बैठे जीवन की दृढ़ता को खो गया. साथ ही, अपने प्रभु आचार्य जो सर्वोपरि है, उनके आश्रय में न्यूनता आ गयी, कमी आ गयी. और केवल यही समझने लगे कि खाने पीने के लिए जीना ही एक जीवन है. इस प्रकार जीने वाले लोग के जीवन में आदर्श नहीं होता. जैसे पश्चिमी समाज का जीवन का एक लक्ष बना—खाओ, पीयो, मौज करो: Eat, drink, be merry. यह उनके जीवन का जहाँ कक्ष था, वह लक्ष जीवन में उनको सुखदायी भले रख (*) प्रतीत हुआ हो, मगर वस्तुतः उनको शान्तिदायक नहीं (*). इस प्रकार के लक्ष वाले लोगों के

जीवन में अशांति भई...और अविचारित, अविवेक के काम करने लगे. इस प्रकार की मनोवृत्ति जब जीवन की बन जाती है, तो मनुष्य केवल परमस्वार्थी हो करके जीता है. उस की स्थिति समझाते हुए आचार्य हमको कहते हैं कि “कालः स्वकार्यं कुरुते न जानाति जानो यतः” [Śikṣāpatra 18.1a]. जीवन में समय अपने काम करता है. समय जो काम करता है, उसकी स्थिति को हम जानते नहीं (*). यदि हम यही बात भले भांति जान जाते हैं, तो हमारे मन में वह स्थिति पैदा नहीं होती हम भागवत कार्य में प्रमाद करते हैं, और अपने कामों के लिए इतना विह्वल रहते हैं कि “क्या करें, कैसे करें, क्या होगा?”—इन पर हमेशा विचार करता है. यह इस प्रकार हमारे एक केवल स्वार्थी चिंतन का प्रभाव हमारे पर (*) पड़ता है. और इसलिए, स्पष्ट बात है, कि हम लोग अपने स्वधर्म कार्य में प्रमाद करते हैं. अपने काम में हमको आलस नहीं आएगी. उस में हम थकान का अनुभाव नहीं करेंगे. और करेंगे तभी हमको विवश होके वह काम करने (*लगेंगे). यह बात हम अपने जीवन में लौकिक में तो सहन कर लेते हैं, मगर सेवा के लिए सहन करना हमें नहीं सीखा. इस बात से एक बात समझनी है—कि अपने लिए सभी को सहन कर लेते हैं. मगर दूसरों के लिए सहन करके जीता, उनको सुख पहुंचाता है. वही एक सची जीवन है. जब हम केवल स्वार्थ के लिए अपने इन्द्रिय के आनंद के लिए जीते हैं, तब हमको पता नहीं चलता है कि यह काल हमारे आयुष कम कर रहा है.

Vacanāmṛt (C):

Excerpts from Prathameśjī lecture, “Rāsapancādhyāyī”

The first thing is this: what is primary in Vaiṣṇava-ness? Behavior and cognition. Until both [good] behavior and cognition have been developed (*nirmāṇ*), and [until] we conduct our practical lives (*vyavahāra*) based on that—[Sure,] we become Vaiṣṇavas, but our worldly, religious and divine cognitions lack that conducive foundation of Vaiṣṇava-ness. Why is that? The obstruction is our egotism (*abhimān*)...

Now, this ‘behavior’ (*ācaraṇ*) is of two kinds: bodily and mental. Both of these should be corrected [and] purified. And practical-life conduct (*vyavahāra*) is through these very [two kinds

of behavior]. The practical-life conduct (*vyavahāra*) of a devotee is free of deceit. What is the reason for this? That the pride of means (*sādhana*) cannot obstruct her.

...each one of [Vallabhācārya's] 16 works (*Ṣoḍaśagranth*) from the *Yamunāṣṭakam* on down and **the *Śikṣāpatra* were composed only for the purpose of giving instruction on the Lord's service (*Bhagavad-sevā*)**. The primary dharma of an individual soul is to live, having become humble, on the Lord's service and grace [and the foods which have been offered to Kṛṣṇa]. If she doesn't do [these things:]—the Lord's *sevā* in the home, or even just a coming near to Kṛṣṇa, or being near to the guru—by guru I mean Vallabhācārya—or staying near to Vaiṣṇava guests—these are all [elements of] religious (*vaidik*) life. These are all dharmas attached to our bodily dharma. All of the Vedic rites and whatever else there is, these only reach fulfillment in the Lord's service and devotion (*bhakti*). When these reach fulfillment, the first thing is that, **when practical-life conduct (*vyavahāra*) and the Lord's *sevā* are included in bhakti, then *vyavahāra* too is included. Then *vyavahāra* is not separate from bhakti. When we act without *vyavahāra*, sorrow arises in our lives.** What is that like, 'without *vyavahāra*'? It's due to discrimination (*bhed-buddhi*) and pride. In discrimination, there is a lack of faith, and here there is pride...

Without a doubt, if we think about it and take a look, then we will discover [unfortunately] that **our practical-life conduct is devoid of spiritual [Vaiṣṇava] qualities.** What was so special about the Lord's bhaktas that were spoken of? **They didn't view practical life through the lens of practical life; they viewed practical life through the lens of *dharma*...**

The best station in human life cannot be reached without the Lord's refuge.

पहली बात यह है कि वैष्णवता में प्रधान क्या है? आचरण और विचार. आचरण और विचार दोनों का जब तक निर्माण नहीं होता, और उसके आधार पर हम व्यवहार नहीं करते. वैष्णव बन जाते हैं, मगर वैष्णवता के अनुकूल आधार से लौकिक, वैदिक, और अलौकिक विचार हम नहीं करते. क्यों नहीं करते? इस में बाधक है हमारे अभिमान...

अब वह आचरण दो प्रकार का है - एक शरीर का और एक मानसिक. ये दोनों ही आचरण पवित्र सुदारना चाहिये. और इन्हीं से व्यवहार होता है. जैसे भगवदीय व्यवहार निष्कपट होता है. कारण क्या है? कि उसको साधन का अभिमान बाधा नहीं कर पाया...

जबकि यमुनाष्टक से लगा करके मात्र षोडशग्रन्थ और शिक्षापत्र भगवद-सेवा के ही लिये उपदेश देने के लिये बने. जीव का प्रधान धर्म यह है कि भगवद-सेवा और भगवद-प्रसाद से निरभिमान हो करके निर्वाह करें. अगर यह नहीं करता, घर में भगवद-सेवा अथवा थोड़ा सा भी प्रभु के सान्निध्य होना, श्री गुरु के सान्निध्य होना (गुरु से तात्पर्य है मेरा वल्लभाचार्य से) अथवा जिसकी, यानि जो है, अतिथि वैष्णव, इनके सान्निध्य रहना यह सब वैदिक व्यवहार हैं. यह है, देह-धर्म के साथ लगे हुए धर्म. इसी प्रकार यह जितने भी वैदिक संस्कार अथवा जो भी कुछ है, यह केवल भगवद-सेवा और भक्ति में संपूर्ण आ जाते हैं. जब संपूर्ण आते हैं, तो सब से पहली बात यह है, कि वह जो सारे व्यवहार और भगवद-सेवा (*कर) इस में आ जाते हैं भक्ति में, तो व्यवहार भी आ जाता है. फिर व्यवहार उससे भिन्न नहीं है. जब हम बिना व्यवहार करते हैं तब हमारे जीवन में क्षोभ पैदा होता है. जो बिना व्यवहार कैसा होता है? कि भेदबुद्धि के कारण और अभिमान के कारण. भेदबुद्धि में अविश्वास होता है और इधर अभिमान होता है...

यह निस्सन्देह अगर हम विचार करके देखें तब हमको पता चलेगा कि हमारे व्यवहार में वैष्णवता नहीं है। तब जो भगवद-भक्त कहे गये, उनकी विशेषता क्या है? उन्होंने व्यवहार को व्यवहार की दृष्टि से नहीं, धर्म की दृष्टि से देखा।...

भलि भांति मनुष्य की स्थिति भगवाद्-आश्रय के बिना नहीं हो सकती।

Analysis of the Bhakti Materials

The condition of anxiety was clearly of major concern to Harirājajī, Gopeśvarjī and Prathameśjī, respective authors of the epistolary, commentarial and verbal teachings translated above. Yet what was the precise nature of the anxiety they discussed: clinical or existential? Were the remedies prescribed practical or purely magical? The spiritual context and language of the text may lead one to assume that the anxieties described and remedies prescribed for the *Śikṣāpatra* audience are existential, aimed at transcendence of this phenomenal world and enacted through a magical process of blind faith. However, it should be recalled here that, according to the purely non-dual philosophy of the Vallabha Sampradāya, bhāva-filled relationship with divinity and the devotionally absorbed state of *nirodha* (cf. p22-6) are ideally experienced in an embodied condition, within this world. The Puṣṭi practitioner takes refuge in Kṛṣṇa—one of whose unlimited forms is the world itself—rather than seeking escape and refuge from what some philosophers had considered a fundamentally illusory world. Careful examination of anxiety in the *Śikṣāpatra* reveals that its authors thus naturally focus on spiritual life in this world.

It may seem at times that the remedy being prescribed for anxiety in *Śikṣāpatra* is the frustratingly circular admonition simply not to have it! [E.g. “One should without a doubt renounce anxiety,” 23.16-17]. However, practical strategies to overcome anxiety are indeed present in the *Śikṣāpatra* itself and were further illuminated by Prathameśjī’s analysis. Upon closer consideration it will become clear that the *Śikṣāpatra* authors and commentators prescribed specific, active and practical processes for removing anxiety, in addition to the seemingly circular step of convincing oneself, through faith in God’s plan, that there is no need for anxiety at all. While this latter faith-based remedy may be limited in effect to the already

devout believer, this does not detract from its potential efficacy for certain individuals. Nor does it relegate that process to the magical or supernatural. In this analysis, I will demonstrate that the contemplative and faith based admonitions in *Śikṣāpatra* were supplemented with practical directives for readers to follow in their daily lives. In a subsequent section, I suggest close parallels between clinical and bhakti approaches to anxiety. Such practical perspectives on bhakti teachings and their potential medical applications have not been extensively explored to date in scholarly literature.

First, is the anxiety described in the *Śikṣāpatra* existential, as in abstract concern over the nature of the soul and its relationship with God? Or is it also of the more clinical type: a debilitating psychological condition of fear and apprehension over realistic or imagined life occurrences? Both types seem to be present; in *Śikṣāpatra* 23.4 Gopeśvarjī directly refers to two kinds of anxiety, *laukik* and *alaukik*: “Kṛṣṇa will definitely grant the reward independently, through the power of grace. Therefore Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas need never have worldly or divine anxieties.” In 23.2 he similarly explained, “Prabhu can perfect everything worldly and divine, and therefore his own ones (*bhagavadīyas*) have no need for anxiety.”

Further indications of a clinical rather than exclusively existential depiction of anxiety in the *Śikṣāpatra* are illustrated by Gopeśvarjī’s comments in 23.7: “How can suffering remain in the heart of such dedicated Vaiṣṇavas? They are miserable from being ignorant, due to worldly anxiety.” Such anxiety is posited as an obstruction to the attainment of devotional elixir in 23.5-7: “Therefore one must conclude that the mind is filled with anxiety, and that is why the experience of *rasa* has not occurred.”

The *Śikṣāpatra* authors also associated anxiety over worldly situations with emotional impurities, such as worldly desires, anger, jealousy and egotism. All of these are said to prevent

Kṛṣṇa from entering the bhakta’s heart. As Gopeśvarjī writes in 23.1: “As long as worldly desires have not fled from the heart, divine mood (*bhāva*) will not settle in the heart, and as a result there will be anxiety every single moment.” Again in 18.8 and 23.1 Gopeśvarjī conveyed the belief that, “As long as the bhakta’s heart is filled with lust and other impurities, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not enter the heart.” This heart connection was made explicit in Harirāyaji’s serialized advice, beginning in 18.5, to “place Kṛṣṇa in the heart (*hrdaye nyaset*).”

The link between anxiety and selfishness in particular is stressed in the initial verses of letter 18, in which Harirāyaji describes people who are “indifferent towards Hari’s work and excessively wrapped up in their own personal activities.” Gopeśvarjī elaborated on this connection: “They are seized by anxiety over many worldly and Vedic duties, *samsārik* desires, the nourishment of the body and senses, lust and so forth, and therefore are negligent.” Prathameśjī brought this concept to life in his lecture with a personal tone, noting that our selfishness and worldly attachments are not so easily overcome: “We stay so wrapped up in our own activities, always thinking ‘What to do? How to proceed? What will happen?’ In this way, the effect of exclusively selfish reflection has befallen us.”¹

The emphasis on service to the Lord and other practitioners common in the Sampradāyik literature and evidenced in the *Śikṣāpatra* letters correlates with certain medical research findings on the role of “helping.” Powell et al. reference studies which “demonstrated that those nursing home residents who were given work responsibilities lived longer than those who were relegated to passive roles. Activities that encourage helping, such as volunteerism, are common among congregation members and have been shown to reduce mortality.”² These clinical findings of decreased mortality rates among nursing home residents who took on helping roles are relevant

¹ Vacanāmṛt B.

² Powell, Shahabi, and Thoresen, “Religion and spirituality,” 48.

to statements made by Prathameśjī. In connection with *Śikṣāpatra* 18.1-2, he noted the importance and benefit of orienting one’s life toward the happiness of others:

The aim of life for the Lord’s bhakta is not limited to living only for oneself or working only to fill one’s own stomach... Everyone withstands [difficulties] for themselves. But [no one] lives withstanding [difficulties] for the sake of others, or to bring others happiness—that is a true life. When we live for our own purposes alone, for the pleasure of our senses, then we don’t realize that this time is diminishing our lifespan.³

For devotional obstructions like selfishness and anxiety, practical remedies in addition to faith based admonitions were recommended to *Śikṣāpatra* readers. Gopeśvarjī stated early in the *Śikṣāpatra* (6.1) that the text would contain practical dhārmik advice: “So having read these letters, appease your mind. In these letters the actions to be taken in the world as well as the divine dharma are all described.” Likewise, his remarks in 23.14 call for more than a passive release of anxiety. The reader is advised to cultivate positive relationships and spend time reviewing sacred literature: “If one places attachment in Puṣṭi Mārga *bhagavadīyas* and recites the *Navaratna* treatise as a daily habit as much as possible, then all anxieties will be removed from the mind.”

The *Śikṣāpatra*’s authors recommend to their readers various practical methods. The teaching to strive toward the removal of anxiety, rather than passively waiting for a magical cure, is evident in *Śikṣāpatra* 23.15: “For one who has removed aversion through all of the Bhagavān-related dharmas described above, all suffering will be banished. He or she will attain supreme happiness in the mind. In this way, many efforts to remove suffering should be made. These efforts increase divine mood (*bhāva*).” Gopeśvarjī summarized the importance of overcoming anxiety and the means to do so in his commentary concluding verse 23.17. These remedies are

³ Vacanāmṛt B.

rooted in the faith that there is no need for anxiety but are reinforced by applying practical and outwardly oriented methods:

Having contemplated the teachings of *Navaratna* (*Nine Jewels*), one should without a doubt renounce anxiety...Having quickly renounced anxiety through this teaching, if one becomes engaged in Bhagavān-related dharma as described above, and with focused mind does bhagavad-sevā, remembrance, associates with intimate bhaktas, daily reflects upon and recites and considers the devotional meanings of this *Navaratna* treatise, then anxiety will be dispelled.

Remedies for both types of anxiety, worldly and existential, were also hinted at in

Gopeśvarjī's commentary on verse 18.3-4:

Contemplating in the mind these and other teachings, do not have even the slightest bit of anxiety. Having placed refuge in the Lord alone in one's mind, there [still] may arise an anxiety, by [the natural tendency of] the human intellect, that "I have no means at all; how then can knowledge bear any fruit?" Even this anxiety is not necessary. If no methods (*sādhana*) can be implemented, still the fruit of dedication is perfected, through the acceptance of Śrī Ācāryajī.

In the above passage, the first remedy for anxiety given is contemplation (*bhāvanā*) of sacred teachings and refuge in Kṛṣṇa. Sacred contemplations—though abstract and not easily quantifiable, like spirituality itself—should not be considered merely magical or transcendental. The final remedy given to the bhakta, in the absence of methods, is to cultivate the faith based recognition that there is no need for such anxiety, due to the power of initiation and acceptance by the bhakti teacher Vallabhācārya. This remedy could as easily be applied to anxieties over actual events like those felt by the authors themselves (the loss of loved ones, lack of good association, distance from sacred lands, etc.) as to existential anxieties over one's qualifications or devotional abilities.

The same remedy, a combination of refuge in the teacher and contemplation of teachings, was prescribed by Harirāyajī in 23.16-17: "By those who have taken shelter in the refuge of our own Ācārya, useless anxiety, even if incurred due to one's own faults, is to be quickly relinquished, by reflection upon these teachings." In this verse, the mention of "one's own

faults” seems to suggest an inclusivity of worldly as well as existential anxiety. In 18.3 as well, the active element of continuous contemplation of sacred teachings was emphasized: “One should contemplate this and other teachings [on anxiety] in the mind day and night.”

Elaborating on this subject, Prathameśjī emphasized in his spoken teachings that to go beyond selfishness and anxiety requires both limiting contemplation of worldly matters and substituting it with deep spiritual reflection upon the divine relationship. In his interpretation of Harirāyajī’s teachings, the healing process appears to demand more than simple recitation and reading:

[Harirāyajī] has explained one more thing about removing anxiety: instead of contemplating the world, for the removal of anxiety (establish) contemplation of intimacy with Bhagavān... Ācārya explained a very deep thing to us. If we learn to contemplate at the time [of anxiety] too, with faith—even though we read sacred texts, Harirāyajī explains one simple thing to us: after reading sacred texts, contemplate. And strive to experience that intimacy.⁴

Prathameśjī promises the effect of this prescribed contemplation to his audience as follows: “We should contemplate Mahāprabhu’s utterances. And from contemplating again and again in the heart...then a natural tendency toward anxiety-lessness will arise in our lives. The absolutely most major catastrophes will not be able to shake us.”⁵ His lectures add another subtle point to the issue of overcoming anxiety. For the bhakta, the goal of healing is a decidedly spiritual one, but not otherworldly. It is a spiritual life in the world, led in the service of God: “To lead an anxiety-free life in order to carry out the Lord’s work with firmness—that is one aim. And just to live an anxiety-free life in the world—that is a different goal.”⁶

Beyond personal efforts to remove anxiety, in Prathameśjī’s lectures faith remains a key foundation and cause for the bhakta’s successful treatment. This faith gives Prathameśjī’s

⁴ Vacanāmṛt A.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

audience the practical ability to find solutions to their problems: “Those who remain in Bhagavān’s shelter, who live with Bhagavān—when we contemplate and see His plays (*līlā*), then when adversity arises we search for solutions instead of faltering—they don’t falter. The reason is that they have full faith (*bharosā*) in their Lord.”⁷

Though Prathameśjī prescribes contemplation of Kṛṣṇa’s divine plays and faith as a means to overcome worldly preoccupation, he repeatedly brings a practical focus to the spiritual teachings of his ancestors. He warns, for example, against lengthy speculation over the faults of others: “What is the point here? That even in such situations, we are not to contemplate the behaviors and thoughts of our own associates or other people from a worldly perspective. Their worldly discussions are limited to the world; one should not bring such things into one’s contemplation. This point is very useful for our practical lives (*vyavahāra*).”⁸

In this way, Prathameśjī contributed deeply to the discussion of anxiety and spirituality in *Śikṣāpatra* by emphasizing the practical side of bhakti essential for real spiritual health. In his recommendations, spiritual principles and outlook are to be applied not just to practices like reading and chanting, nor to mystic reflections, but more importantly, to practical life situations. Hence he glorifies the great bhaktas who apply dhārmik principles to real life: “What was so special about the Lord’s bhaktas that were spoken of? They didn’t view practical life through the lens of practical life; they viewed practical life through the lens of dharma.”⁹

I hope to have convincingly shown that practical elements of spiritual life, which have largely escaped the glance of prior researchers, were emphasized by the *Śikṣāpatra* authors and the bhakti teacher Prathameśjī. Still the question remains, can the objective researcher, who may

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Vacanāmṛt C.

not subscribe to the religious framework of the *Śikṣāpatra* authors' teachings, derive broader meaning from the causes, nature, and resolution of the anxieties discussed? Studies showing the promising potential of spirituality as a factor in mental health suggest that the *Śikṣāpatra*'s descriptions and remedies for anxiety may indeed have broader relevance and application.

Comparison of Clinical and Bhakti Perspectives on Stress and Anxiety

In this section I outline potential correspondences between the clinical and bhakti diagnoses and remedies pertaining to anxiety. The *Śikṣāpatra* authors and 20th century commentator Prathameśjī devoted significant attention to the condition of anxiety. As discussed in the earlier section on “Authorial Intent,” the primary author of the *Śikṣāpatra*, Harirāyajī, professes anxiety and stress over his distance from the sacred land of Braj, his lack of exalted company and emotional feelings for Kṛṣṇa, etc. The first recipient of the text, Gopeśvarjī, also mentioned his mental agitation and anxiety over worldly relationships. By the context of the letters Gopeśvarjī can also be assumed to be feeling certain mental stress due to the recent death of his wife. At times the authors employ medical and Ayurvedic analogies in their discussion of anxiety.

Depictions of anxiety in the *Śikṣāpatra* are linked with emotional symptoms (depression, suffering, agitation of mind, fear, selfishness), but not in necessarily clinical terms. Though there may not be an exact equivalence between the anxieties described in the *Śikṣāpatra* and in medical literature, there are certainly parallels worthy of note. In addition to parallels with clinical anxiety, the anxiety described in *Śikṣāpatra* corresponds with the related condition of stress, which itself can be a precursor to anxiety. As indicated by the NIMH, chronic stress even from routine (as opposed to traumatic) stressful life events can deplete the immune system and other biological functions: “Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may

lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorder, and other illnesses.”¹

Some studies group psychological stress together with anxiety and depression as “indices of emotional distress.”² Because stress is one precursor to anxiety and other physical and mental health conditions, stress and anxiety are often addressed in tandem in studies and journals.³ In their study on “The Effects of Yoga on Anxiety and Stress,” Li and Goldsmith summarize the serious health implications of the two conditions: “Psychological stress has been linked to deleterious effects on the immune system, while anxiety has been connected to coronary heart disease, decreased quality of life, and suicidal behavior.”⁴ The effects of stress on health are perhaps most clearly evidenced in relation to cardiac functioning:

Heart attacks kill more Americans than any other single cause of death. That stress is related to coronary heart disease is not surprising when we consider the physiological mechanisms that stress brings into play: accelerated heart rate, increased blood pressure, increased serum cholesterol, and fluid retention resulting in increased blood volume.⁵

The connection between stress/anxiety and the physical heart is present also in the ancient Indian medical system of Ayurveda, to which Harirāyajī and Gopeśvarjī also refer (for example in *Śikṣāpatra* 23.9, below). In the early first millennium CE, Suśruta and Caraka referred to this very issue in their *Samhitā* texts:

Ayurveda maintains that the states of health and disease are influenced by three humours namely vāta, pitta and kapha collectively known as tridoṣa... Caraka and Susruta state that symptoms of heart disease are manifested due to excessive indulgence in incompatible food, suppression of natural urges, physical and psychological trauma, fear and anxiety.⁶

¹ “Fact Sheet on Stress,” National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), accessed April 30, 2013, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/fact-sheet-on-stress.shtml>.

² Vedhara et al. “Relationship between salivary cortisol, stress, anxiety and depression,” 91.

³ For example: *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*.

⁴ Li and Goldsmith, “The effects of yoga on anxiety and stress,” 22.

⁵ Greenberg, *Comprehensive Stress Management*, 49.

⁶ Kumar and Prabhakar, “Heart disease in Ayurveda,” 81, 82-3.

The *Śikṣāpatra* contains evidence confirming at the very least the authors' superficial familiarity with the Ayurvedic medical system, through their occasional references to the three humours. Could they have also connected heart health with the conditions of fear and anxiety? As mentioned above, the connection between anxiety and the spiritual heart was made explicit in the *Śikṣāpatra*. The theme of placing Kṛṣṇa in one's heart (cf. *Śikṣāpatra* 18.5-11), as well as ubiquitous statements in the *Śikṣāpatra* about the need to remove anxieties and fear from the heart in order for Kṛṣṇa to enter it, suggest a natural if not clinical understanding of the link between emotional and cardiac health.

Certain theories about stress share parallel features with concepts found in the *Śikṣāpatra* literature. Regarding the "Life-Events" theory of stress, the authors of the *Comprehensive Stress Management* textbook note that researchers quantifying stress "have compiled lists of major stressful life events such as the death of a loved one."⁷ The emotional and in this case devotional stress from the loss of loved ones is a theme expressly mentioned by Harirāyajī, who cites the death of his father and of Gopeśvarjī's wife as destabilizing life events.

Perhaps most relevant to the *Śikṣāpatra*'s bhakti tradition, which emphasizes *satsanga*, association with other practitioners, is the "Social Support Theory" of stress: "Still other stress experts envision stress occurring when there is not enough social support available to respond to the event effectively...Social support helps you cope with the event and therefore decreases your level of stress."⁸ Similarly, Gopeśvarjī mentions the power of social support in his commentary of *Śikṣāpatra* 23.10: "Through the association of God's people, all bodily and mental impurities are abolished."

⁷ Greenberg, *Comprehensive Stress Management*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

A 2012 statistical publication by the American Psychological Association, “Stress in America: Our Health at Risk”⁹ includes several components of stress management that resemble those identified and discussed in *Śikṣāpatra*. Harirāyajī and Gopeśvarjī recommend singing (23.12), reading spiritual texts and *satsanga* (23.10) as techniques to dispel anxiety. These practices correspond closely with some of the most common stress-management techniques reported by the APA respondents: listening to music (48%), exercise (47%), reading (42%), and spending time with friends and family (39%).¹⁰

Just as the *Śikṣāpatra* emphasizes the importance of avoiding people who are averse to bhakti (cf. discussions of *bahirmukhajana* in 23.8-10), “avoiding people or situations that are stressful” (53%) was the fourth most effective stress management strategy perceived by the APA respondents, behind focusing on the positive (62%), managing time better (56%), and being flexible and compromising (53%).¹¹ Even the latter three techniques may also have counterparts in the bhakti practices delineated in *Śikṣāpatra*. The *Śikṣāpatra* authors offer specific time management techniques to their readers. A popular passage from *Śikṣāpatra* 18.2 describes how one should work only for 4.5 hours, if necessary, with the faith that whatever needs to be accomplished can be done in that time. Regarding focus on the positive, Gopeśvarjī recounts in *Śikṣāpatra* 18.17 the story of the bhakta Prahlāda, whose positive focus on spiritual matters allowed him to overcome severe worldly struggles:

Hiraṇyakaśipu gave Prahlād a lot of grief, but Prahlād did not leave his absorption in the divine dharma and his refuge in Bhagavān; then Śrī Nṛsimhajī appeared and removed his obstructions, and the reward was attained. In the very same way, if Puṣṭi Mārga Vaiṣṇavas are focused (*tatpar*) in the Puṣṭi path, the fruit will be attained.

⁹ “Stress in America: Our Health at Risk,” American Psychological Association, accessed April 30, 2013, <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2011/final-2011.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17-8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

On the topic of being “flexible and compromising,” as mentioned by the APA respondents, the *Śikṣāpatra* reader will find several related concepts. On the one hand, in terms of one’s devotional focus, the authors discourage compromise. In the passages translated above, one finds exhortations for exclusive devotion to the spiritual luminaries and chosen divinities of the tradition. These concepts of one-pointed devotion do not immediately convey flexibility or compromise. However, regarding one’s personal circumstances, readers are recommended to be flexible and compromising, in the sense that they should remain content with whatever arises. “One should remain content with whatever is obtained,” Gopeśvarjī notes in 23.13. Similarly, in 36.7, the authors suggest via a medical analogy that obstructions should be gradually left aside rather than hastily renounced, conveying a sense of flexibility and compromise in adjusting one’s worldly situations. Attempts to immediately leave complications are likened by Harirāyajī and Gopeśvarjī to hasty medical measures, which can actually exacerbate the medical condition being treated.

Some common symptoms and effects of stress reported by the APA further correspond with issues discussed in *Śikṣāpatra*. Irritability and anger (42%), feeling nervous or anxious (39%), fatigue (37%), feeling depressed or sad (37%), and lack of interest, motivation or energy (35%) were the leading responses.¹² Many of these symptoms find direct correlates in the *Śikṣāpatra*. In *Śikṣāpatra* 18.8, anger is included in the traditional list of impurities which must be removed from the heart before Kṛṣṇa can enter there. It has already been mentioned how the *Śikṣāpatra* authors reported feeling depressed and sad due to the personal and circumstantial obstructions to their devotional life (cf. p39). Sadness in the sense of suffering (*duḥkh*) is mentioned in *Śikṣāpatra* 23.7: “Why would someone have suffering in the mind? Remaining

¹² Ibid.

ignorant, due to worldly anxiety alone, they are sad, and the experience of the bhāva filled nectars does not arise.” Lack of interest and motivation is analogous to the bhakti concept of *pramāda*, a kind of indifference, negligence, or apathy discussed in *Śikṣāpatra* 18.1 and elaborated upon in Śrī Prathameśjī’s spoken explanation on that verse. The spiritual framework of the *Śikṣāpatra* then seems to address many of the mental health issues present in the clinical literature on stress.

Beyond stress lies the more advanced but related condition of anxiety, generally defined as “a state of uneasiness and apprehension, as about future uncertainties.” In clinical psychiatric terms, anxiety is defined as “a state of apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event or situation, often impairing physical and psychological functioning.”¹³ The anxiety described in *Śikṣāpatra* addresses these very symptoms, suggesting that the authors and audience of this spiritual text may be dealing with more than just stress. It will be recalled, from the above discussion of authorial intent, that Harirāyajī had mentioned the lack of ease and stability in his body and that his mind was depressed. Gopeśvarjī had likewise mentioned afflictions and mental agitation over household and bodily relations as obstructions to the devotional mood. The primary difference between the clinical definitions and the conditions depicted in *Śikṣāpatra* is that the result of excessive apprehension, uncertainty and fear of a bhakta seems to be conceived as not only physical and psychological impairment, but also spiritual. That is, the state of anxiety prevents the bhakta from performing Kṛṣṇa sevā properly, if at all, and deters Kṛṣṇa from entering the heart.

Given these analogous if not exact correspondences between spiritual and clinical stress and anxiety, the following question arises. Is it possible that clinical methods of assessing

¹³ *The American Heritage Dictionary.*

spirituality could also be tested on practitioners of this bhakti tradition, in order to aid researchers' understanding of the role of spirituality in mental health? A brief review of the measurement scales in use suggests the possibility. Hill et al. provide an analysis of the most prevalent RS measurement scales in use by researchers and research institutes. These scales include the Multidimensional Measure of Religion and Spirituality, the Spiritual Well-Being scale, the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire, Piedmont's Spiritual Transcendence Scale, Hood's Mysticism Scale, Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale, and Religious Involvement Inventory, among others.¹⁴ One of the potentially most relevant among these, for future studies regarding the connection between bhakti literature and health outcomes, is the Religious Commitment Inventory-10. Hill et al. report this scale to have "demonstrated good reliability and validity on individuals from a variety of religious traditions, including Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus, something rare among RS measures."¹⁵ It might be fruitful for further research to complete a measurement scale questionnaire from the perspective of bhakti teachers like Vallabhācārya, Harirāyajī, Caitānya Mahāprabhu, and others, using references to their writings to hypothesize their responses to the given questions.

In the prior section on Vallabhācārya's bhakti outlook, I provided a philosophical context that highlighted the importance of this world in the *Śikṣāpatra* tradition. The world, for the *Śikṣāpatra* audience, seems to be conceived as a sacred site preferential in many ways to distant transcendent realms. Significantly, in the clinical context, the relationship between the sacred and the world has also been discussed. In the above mentioned measurement scales on religious commitment, as Hill et al. note:

RS commitment scales attempt to measure how internally invested a person is in their spiritual or religious beliefs. RS commitment includes the extent to which an

¹⁴ Hill et al., "A Few Good Measures," 28-33.

¹⁵ Ibid., 30.

individual has developed a spiritual lens and framework through which the world is perceived and understood. Hill and Pargament (2003) suggested that those who see the world in largely spiritual terms will likely have a greater appreciation for the sacred and will see the sacred as encompassing the totality of life. Less of a distinction will be made between aspects of the world that are sacred and those that are not (e.g., one's body or psyche may be considered sacred, leading to greater physical and mental care).¹⁶

In this measurement scale for the clinical assessment of spirituality, the crucial importance of the practitioner's view of the world is brought to light. This suggests not only a potentially fruitful contribution of bhakti literature to clinical studies, but also the importance of analyzing bhakti traditions in terms of their view of the world and the emotional challenges and conditions experienced in spiritual life. These may be missed if the scholarly gaze centers on the tradition's speculations about transcendent worlds and experiences, which I have argued is the case to date in studies of the spiritual literature of the Vallabha Sampradāya.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Conclusions

The *Śikṣāpatra* letters composed by Śrī Harirāyajī, the vernacular commentary of Gopeśvarjī, and the recorded lectures by Prathameśjī were analyzed above with particular attention to their treatment of anxiety. I examined those materials to test the thesis that bhakti literature may encompass practical applications of spiritual teachings often overlooked in favor of the transcendent, otherworldly spiritual themes in bhakti texts. When compared with analogous clinical literature designed to assess the impact of spirituality and religion on mental and physical health outcomes, these bhakti materials can also be assigned a new value for their potential contribution to our understanding of spirituality and health.

The key to unlocking the relevance and application of bhakti literature, in this comparative context, is to analyze on their own terms the interpretive perspectives internal to the tradition. Firsthand research in the field and consultation with sampradāyik sources were thus instrumental to the depth and accuracy in the work of Frederick Smith, James Redington, and Peter Bennett, as initially discussed. One way of assessing the value of the *Śikṣāpatra*'s anxiety treatments was therefore to consider in detail the authorial intent, audience and interpretation of the text evidenced in commentarial layers.

The *Śikṣāpatra* authors and commentators treat anxiety with spiritual remedies, aiming to guide their audience into a spiritual life. Intertextuality with other devotional works deepens the *Śikṣāpatra* reader's experience and confidence in the treatment. The rich narrative techniques of the text likewise tap into the spiritual "capital" of the tradition. Yet if the faith based terms of a religious tradition are dismissed as magical or transcendental, their applicability to the practical lives of the readers can be overlooked. The prescriptive remedies for anxiety in the *Śikṣāpatra* included reading, listening, satsanga, and chanting, while the deeper levels of spiritual healing, in

the commentarial interpretations, were seen to be fully accessible only with selfless service, committed faith, and sacred contemplation. The success of the treatment was founded upon faith but fully integrated with the bhakta's practical daily life. By giving attention to the practical elements of one spiritual tradition's treatment of anxiety, I hope to have demonstrated that bhakti texts have much to contribute to our understanding of the elusive but potentially powerful effects of spiritual and religious life on mental health.

With further research and studies on bhakti literature's clinical effects, I hope that we may one day understand how spiritual remedies may produce quantifiable results. To allow for that possibility to even arise, however, I believe that more attention must be paid to the practical elements of spiritual life depicted in bhakti texts. Our scholarly focus has to date remained primarily on either the more mundane elements of bhakti patronage and community building, or transcendental speculations regarding other worlds. Extracting the practical value of spiritual texts, according to my analysis, can be accomplished by drawing from internal commentarial evidence in living text traditions like the *Śikṣāpatra*, while continuing to explore the historical context and manuscript evidence of such texts.

Finally, on the subject of audience as well as internal commentary, we might analyze the structure and effect of the *Śikṣāpatra*'s spiritual treatment by considering Gopeśvarjī as a model patient. He was the text's very first reader and commentator as well as recipient of the worldly and existential anxiety treatments prescribed therein. The primary level of treatment was the positive association (*satsanga*) with his elder brother attained through their correspondence. On a basic level this kept Gopeśvarjī turned towards dhārmik subjects and away from worldly concerns. Because the subject of the letters was often the names, forms and plays of Kṛṣṇa, Gopeśvarjī was effectively repeating the sacred names and contemplating his relationship with

the divine while he read and wrote. But arguably the most engaging aspect of Gopeśvarjī's experience is that he took the time and effort to compose an extensive commentary explicitly for the benefit of others. By performing that service, Gopeśvarjī doubtless in large measure removed his own grief and even appeased the troubles of his elder brother Harirāyajī. Gopeśvarjī and Harirāyajī's efforts continue to soothe the anxious and troubled minds of the text's devoted readers to the present day, including the present author.

Appendix A: Śikṣāpatra Print Editions

The popularity and importance of *Śikṣāpatra* is attested by over a dozen print editions in Brajhbhāṣā, Hindi, English, and Gujarati (along with the original verses in Sanskrit), as well as several books based on the *Śikṣāpatra* proposing to offer the text's *sār*, or essence (no. 18-21 below). Most of the print editions I list below have been gathered from WorldCat catalogue (no. 1, 6-11) and a list compiled by the Pushti Sahitya Reference Library in Mumbai (no. 12-21).¹

My translations for the purpose of this thesis were prepared by referring primarily to SS 1915 [no. 1 below, the 1915 Subodhinī Sabhā edition], as it is the oldest edition available and seems to have been compiled with reference to several manuscripts, and under the supervision of a lineage holder familiar with the tradition and its literature. I compared this with the most recent popular edition, VMM [no. 2, an Indore edition from 2007], and SS 1936 [no. 3, the Subodhinī Sabhā's Hindi edition of 1936], which offers another layer of interpretation by virtue of translation. I also noted, and sometimes preferred, variant readings found in JMS [Manuscript no. 13, listed with other mss in the table in Appendix B].

1. *Śrī Harirāyaji kṛta Baḍe Śikṣāpatra, Śrī Gopeśvaraji kṛta Vrajabhāṣā ṭīkā sahita*, by Harirāya, Gopeśvara. Ahmedabad: Subodhinī Sabhā, Samvat 1972 [1915 CE]. *Ṭṛtīyāvṛtti* (3rd printing) (Microform).

The WorldCat catalogue entries list this edition's dates as 1972 [1913]. The Microform itself shows only Samvat 1972, which would be closer to 1915, so it is not clear where the 1913 date has been taken from. In the microform, the word "*sane*" (Western calendar date) is visible, but the area where that date was listed has been torn. I rely on this as the most authoritative print edition, based on information given about the various sources consulted in its production. It was

¹ Shah and Shah. *Pushti Sahitya for Reference*, accessed April 15, 2013, <http://www.readbag.com/pushtimarg-newpushti-pushti-vidhanam-book-pushti-sahitya-khajano>.

also reviewed by a lineage teacher who likely possessed more than passing familiarity with the subject matter and related literature of his tradition. As its *prastāvanā* relates, “Gosvāmi Śrī Nṛsimlālji Mahārāja made the effort to have this corrected (*śuddh*) *Śikṣāpatra* [edition] printed so that divine souls [Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas] could attain wisdom (*ācho bodh*) and have the teachings of the bhakti path firmly established in their hearts by reading it. He brought together the following materials: a Sanskrit commentary written on the 19th letter of the *Śikṣāpatra* by Ratnabhaṭṭ, a Praśnorā Nāgara [Brahmin] from Junagadh; 5 or 6 old books of *Baḍe Śikṣāpatra*; 3 *Śikṣāpatra* books found in the temples of Vallabhkul Bālaks, used for their own recitation, containing the mūl Sanskrit verses; and 2 “*Choṭe Śikṣāpatra*” books based on the mūl verses. [From these materials, Nṛsimlālji Mahārāja] had a single corrected edition prepared by Shastri Chaganlal Amarji, a teacher in the Śrī Subodhinī Pāṭhśālā established through his authority. He then read Chaganlal Amarji’s edition, corrected it, and had it printed through the Śrī Subodhinī Sabhā.”

2. *Iktālīs Baḍe Śikṣāpatra*, Vaiṣṇava Mitra Maṇḍal Sārvaajanik Nyās, Indore. 5th edition, 2007.

In this edition, Goswami Rukmani Bahuji mentions that this Trust (*nyās*) had previously published the *Śikṣāpatra* in 2 volumes “in Hindi.” She contrasts those with the current edition: “According to the wishes of the Vaiṣṇavas [this edition] is being released in Puruṣottama Vāṇī (Brajbhāṣā).” Introductions by Balkishan Go. Gabbāḍ and Dr. Jayaben Shukla are included. Shukla identifies herself as the editor of this edition, in an introduction dated July 15, 2007. She identifies this as the 4th edition (*catūrtha samskarana*), although the front matter of the book calls it the 5th edition, also with the date 2007. Shukla mentions having been entrusted by the Nyās with correcting and editing this edition (“*is catūrtha samsōdhita samskaran men*

śuddhīkaran tathā samśodhan kī sevā”). She mentions having corrected text by comparing, to the extent possible, to an unspecified “original” text: “*mūl se milākar śuddh kiyā hai.*”

3. *Śrī Harirāyakṛt Baḍe Śikṣāpatra: Śrī Gopeśvarajī kṛt Vrajabhāṣā ṭīkā sahita*, by Harirāya, Gopeśvara. Revised and edited by Śrī Subodhinī Sabhā. 4th vṛtti, 1936. [Hindi]
4. *Śrī Harirāyakṛt Baḍe Śikṣāpatra: Śrī Gopeśvarajī kṛt Vrajabhāṣā ṭīkā sahita*, by Harirāya, Gopeśvara. Revised and edited by Śrī Subodhinī Sabhā. Lucknow: Jankiprasad Agraval, 1972 [Hindi?]

Paul Arney gives the above citation in his 2007 article, “Baḍe Śikṣā Patra: A Vallabhite Guide to the Worship of Krishna’s Divine Images.” It seems similar to the edition #1 listed above, which is also by the Śrī Subodhinī Sabhā, also with the date 1972, with the possibility of confusion between V.S. and CE dates. Arney’s reference to this work lists Jankiprasad Agraval, which seems from its position in the reference to be the name of a printer or printing press.

5. *41 Baḍe Śikṣāpatra*. Reprint of edition edited by Dwarkadas Parikh. Ahmedabad: Puja Prakashan, 2005. [Brajbhāṣā]
6. *Śikṣāpatra*, Aligarh, 1870. Lithographed edition (Microform), held in British Library, South Asia Manuscript Project record number 12686. From the cover, it seems to have been published in Viśvāmitrapur by Śrī Giri Prasād Prakāśak Yantrālaya. [Brajbhāṣā]
7. *41 Baḍe Śikṣāpatra : mūla śloka, ślokārtha, evaṃ vyākhyā sahita* by Harirāya.; Phatahacanda Vāsu; Ghanaśyāmadāsa Mukhiyā. Śrī Vaiṣṇava Mitra Maṇḍal, Indore: 1972 [1975]. [“Hindi”=Brajbhāṣā]
8. *Bade Shikshapatra*. Bombay: Shetha Narayanadasa and Jethananda Asanamala Trust Fund, 1962. [cited in Barz 1976]

9. *Bṛhada Śikṣāpatra: mūḷa śloka - Śrī Harirāyajīnā siddhānto ane bhāvanānā patro - Vrajabhāshā ṭīkānusāra Gujarātī anuvāda*, by Harirāyaji Mahāprabhuji.; Harendra Ha [?] Śukla. Sūrata : Śrī Harihara Pustakālaya, 2004. [Gujarati]
10. *Bṛhat Śikṣāpatra : (mūḷa śloka ane Śrī Gopeśvarajīkṛta Vrajabhāshā ṭīkānusāra Gujarātī anuvāda)* by Harirāya; Gopeśvara; Translated by Sundaralāla Maṇilāla. Ahmedabad: Śrī Lakṣmī Pustaka Bhaṇḍāra, 1978, 8th edition [1976, 7th edition]. [Gujarati]
11. *Bruhad Shikshapatra*. Shantilal Manilal Mehta. Rajkot: Pravin, 1995. [Gujarati]
12. *Bade Shikshapatra* [Hindi/Gujarati] Ed., Bipin Biharidas, Surat
13. *Bade Shikshapatra* [Gujarati] Vallabh Granth Prakashan, Surat
14. *Bade Shikshapatra* [Gujarati] M.V. Gandhi, Patan
15. *Bade Shikshapatra 41 (Mūl)*, [Gujarati] Patan
16. *Shikshapatra* [Gujarati] Vrajdham
17. *Shikshapatram* [Gujarati], Lallubhai Desai, Ahmedabad
18. *Shikshapatra Granth Sar* [Gujarati], Bhailalbhai Shetha, Patan
19. *Shikshapatra Prasnotari 1-2* [Gujarati], Bipindas, Surat
20. *Shikshapatra Sar* [Gujarati], Goswami Nikunjalata Betiji, Mumbai
21. *Shikshapatra nu Achaman 1-4*, [Gujarati], Rameshbhai Parikh, Mahesana
22. *Shri Harirayajis [sic] Bade Shiksha Patra*. English transl. Krishnaa Kinkari. Vraja Kishori Publications, 2012.
23. *Shri Harirayaji's Shiksha Patra: 41 Letters of Spiritual Counsel, with Shri Gopeshwarji's Commentary*. English transl. Shyamdas and Vallabhadas. Pratham Peeth Publications, 2013.

Appendix B: Śikṣāpatra Manuscripts

Further research in India will be necessary to determine the dates and locations of handwritten copies of the *Śikṣāpatra*, and to develop a detailed manuscript history of the text. Numerous uncatalogued manuscripts can be expected to be found in the homes and private temples of the Vallabhkul lineage holders, as well as Puṣṭi Mārgīya Vaiṣṇavas. Still, the relatively wide geographic range of extant manuscripts (which, according to my data, have been held in Jodhpur, Varanasi, Kota, Jatipura, and perhaps Dakore) indicates the widespread popularity and range of the *Śikṣāpatra* text.

Entries no. 1-12 below are listed at the Indian government's National Mission for Manuscripts (namami.org). I have left the variations in title and author as found in their catalogue. Three are perhaps derivative works (no. 1 *Śikṣāpatra bhāṣā*, no. 5 *Śikṣāpatra ko arth*, and no. 6 *Harirāyaji kṛtśikṣā*). The brittle condition and lack of commentary in no. 11 suggest an early version, but unfortunately namami.org does not list dates of the manuscripts in their online catalogue.

I refer in my *Śikṣāpatra* translations to the manuscript *JMS*, listed as no. 13 in the table below. I found this incomplete manuscript of 17 folios in a storeroom of the Mathuradheesh Haveli in Jatipura. It begins with the latter portion of the 4th verse of letter 18 and concludes with the 37th letter. I find it strange that the manuscript ends with the 37th letter, whereas other editions include 41 letters. The last folio ends towards the top of the page, and with colophon in red ink: *iti śrīharirāyaji kṛt saptatrinśatamaṁ śikṣāpatraṁ / śubhe bhavatuḥ / kalyanām bhavatuḥ / śrīrastu / samvat 1866* [though the date seems like it may have been altered from an original 1886].

I recorded MS no. 14 from one of the catalogues on site at the Vrindavan Research Institute; its title “*Shikshapatri*” has perhaps been confused for the work by that name by Svāmī Narāyāṇa. The MS is attributed to Harirāyajī, is of 258 folios and dated V.S. 1935 (~1878 CE). I found no other *Śikṣāpatra* MSS in subsequent searches of the Vrindaban Research Institute’s catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts volumes 1, 2, 3, and 5 and the catalogue of Hindi manuscripts part 1, under the terms *Śikṣāpatra*, *baḍe*, and *iktālīs* and among the various works catalogued under *Harirāya* and *Haridāsa*. I have not yet been able to view no. 15, a purported late-18th/early-19th century MS of *Śikṣāpatra* with a Brajbhāṣā ṭīka by Bhaṭṭjī Mahārāja, guru to the Gujarati bhakta-poet Dayārām, in the private collection of a Vaiṣṇava in Dakore. In a handwritten catalogue of 1000 manuscripts held at the Mathuradheesh Mandir in Kota, Rajasthan,¹ I located two more manuscripts (nos. 16-17 below); other *Śikṣāpatra* manuscripts are likely present in that collection, but it is not yet fully catalogued.

¹ The unpublished catalogue represents only about one fifth of the private collection of manuscripts held at the temple; the rest have not yet been catalogued.

	Title	Location	Author	Language	Subject	MS #	Folios	Notes
1.	शिक्षापत्र - भाषा	राजस्थान प्राच्य विद्या प्रतिष्ठान (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Rajasthani	Dharmaśāstra / Darsiyāt-i Islāmiyah	16586/1	51	
2.	हरि राय के शिक्षा पत्र	राजस्थान प्राच्यविद्या प्रतिष्ठान	हरि राय	Hindi	Bhakti	12320/6	34	
3.	शिक्षापत्र	महाराजा मानसिंह पुस्तक प्रकाश शोध केन्द्र (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Sanskrit	Vedānga ->Śikṣā	2372	25	incomplete
4.	शिक्षापत्र	महाराजा मानसिंह पुस्तक प्रकाश शोध केन्द्र (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Sanskrit	Vedānga ->Śikṣā	2371	16	complete
5.	शिक्षापत्र को अर्थ	राजस्थान प्राच्य विद्या प्रतिष्ठान (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Hindi	Bhakti	37041/1	35	

	Title	Location	Author	Language	Subject	MS #	Folios	Notes
6.	हरिरायजी कृतशिक्षा	राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Hindi, Brajbhāṣā	Nītiśāstra	9678(5)	3	listed as complete despite being only 3 folios
7.	हरिरायजी के शिक्षापत्र	राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Brajbhāṣā	Nītiśāstra	8629/1	83	complete
8.	हरिरायजी के शिक्षापत्र	राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान (Jodhpur)	हरिरायजी	Brajbhāṣā	Nītiśāstra	8630	67	complete
9.	शिक्षापत्र	नटनागर शोध संस्थान (Mandsaur, M.P.)	हरिराय	Hindi	Nītiśāstra	23	121	with commentary; missing last Śikṣāpatra
10.	शिक्षा पत्र	राजस्थान प्राच्य विद्या प्रतिष्ठान (Jodhpur)	हरिरायजी	Rajasthani	Bhakti	28267	54	
11.	शिक्षासंग्रह	भृगुकार्यालय (Varanasi)	हरिराय	n/a	Vedānga ->Śikṣā->Vedalakṣaṇa	n/a	17	brittle condition; incomplete; no commentary

	Title	Location	Author	Language	Subject	MS #	Folios	Notes
12.	शिक्षापत्र	राजस्थान प्राच्य विद्या प्रतिष्ठान (Jodhpur)	हरिराय	Hindi, Rajasthani	Bhakti	20767/1	58 pages	
13.	शिक्षापत्र	Jatipura	हरिरायजी	Sanskrit	n/a	n/a	17	Date: Samvat 1866 or possibly 1886 (1809/1829 CE); begins with latter part of verse 4, letter 18 and ends after letter 37, with a colophon
14.	Shikshapatri	Vrindavan Research Institute	Harirayaji	n/a	n/a	Serial #1852, Ascension #10842	258	dated V.S. 1935 (~1878 CE)

	Title	Location	Author	Language	Subject	MS #	Folios	Notes
15.	शिक्षापत्र	Private collection, Dakore	Harirāyājī and Bhaṭṭjī Mahārāja	Sanskrit, Brajbhāṣā	n/a	n/a	unknown	A purported late 18th / early 19th century MS with a Brajbhāṣā ṭīka by Bhaṭṭjī Mahārāja, guru to the Gujarati bhakta-poet Dayārām
16.	शिक्षापत्र	Mathuradheesh Mandir, Kota	हरिरायजी	Sanskrit	Bhakti	1043 [847]	5	Est. 18 th c. Listed as complete despite small number of folios. Somewhat large size (32 x 10 cm.)
17.	शिक्षापत्र	Mathuradheesh Mandir, Kota	हरिरायजी	Sanskrit	Bhakti	108 [103]	1	Est. 19 th c. Listed as complete, yet only 1 folio (23 x 10.7 cm). <i>Kiṭayukt</i> (worm-holed) condition

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